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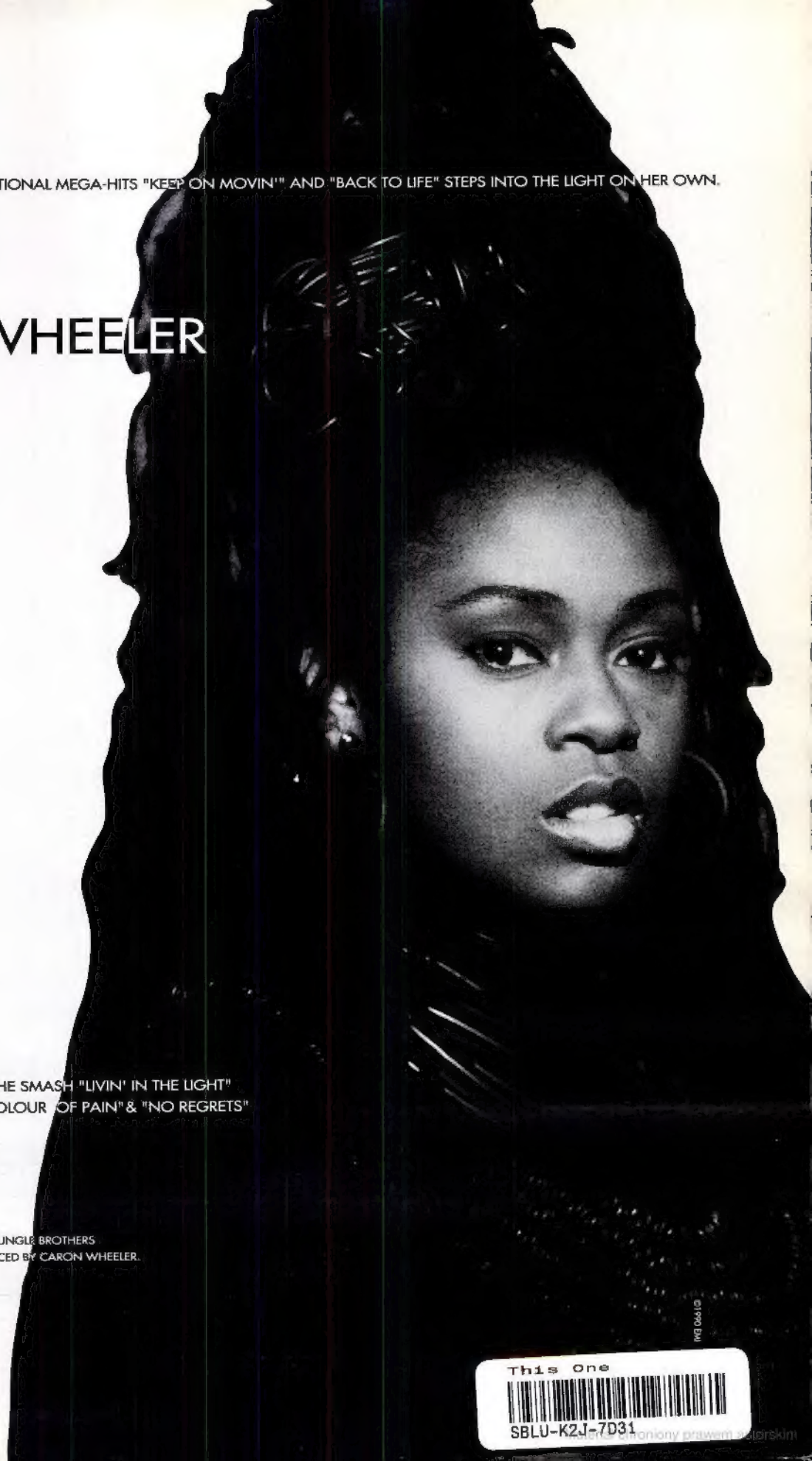

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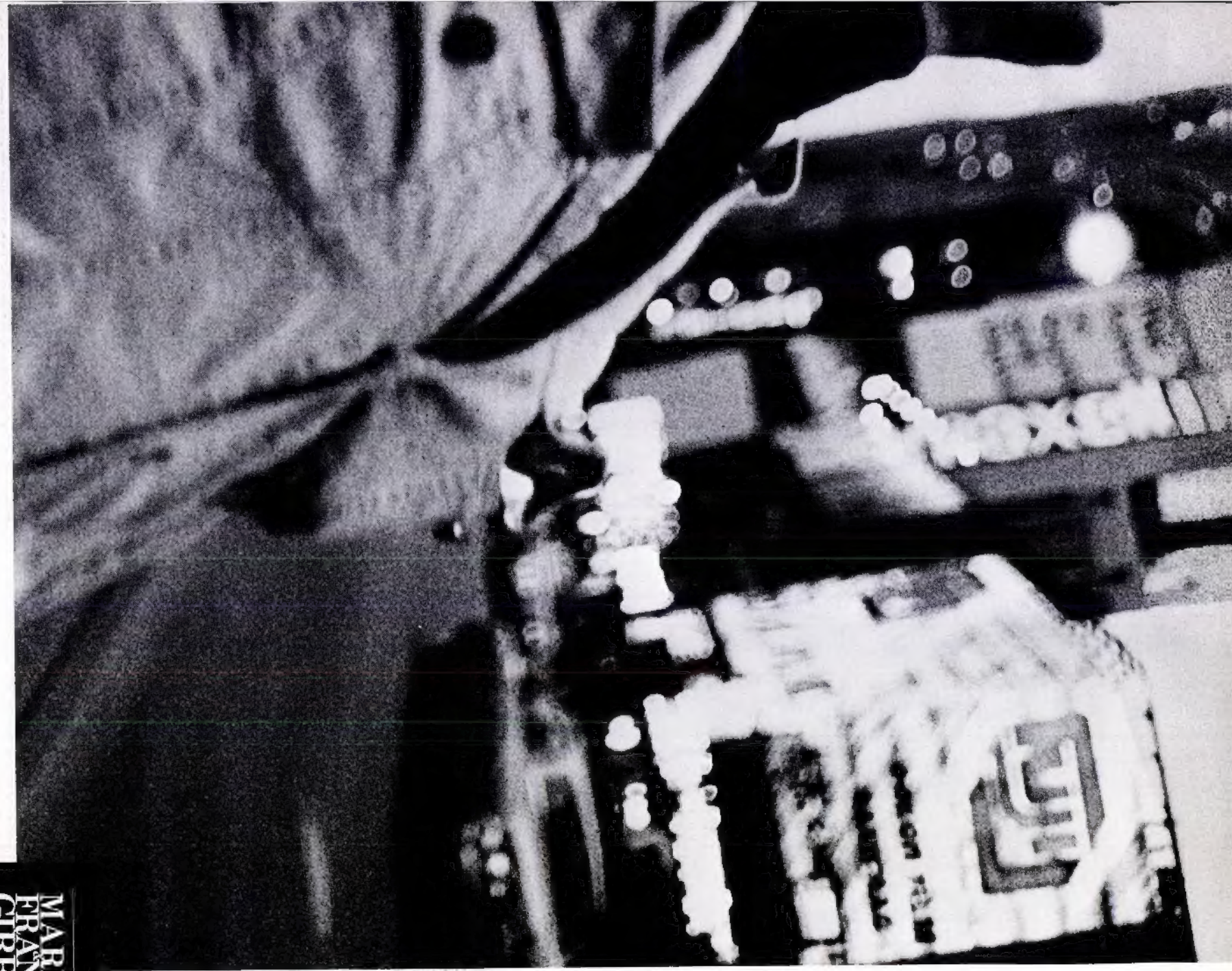

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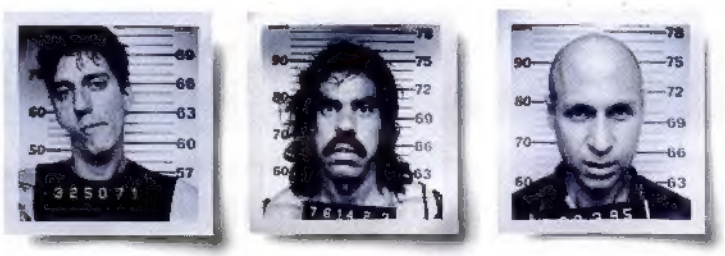

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The best, the brightest (and in one case, the darkest) artists to watch for during the coming year. Call it SPIN's house of the rising stars, from the devilish Glenn Danzig, page **28**, to the deee-gorgeous, deee-groovy Deee-Lite, page **32**. And that's just for starters: Other artists, scenes, and styles determined to impress themselves upon you in 1991 follow, beginning on page **36**.

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Danzig cover and above photographs by Anton Corbijn. Deee-Lite cover photograph by Jesse Frohman.

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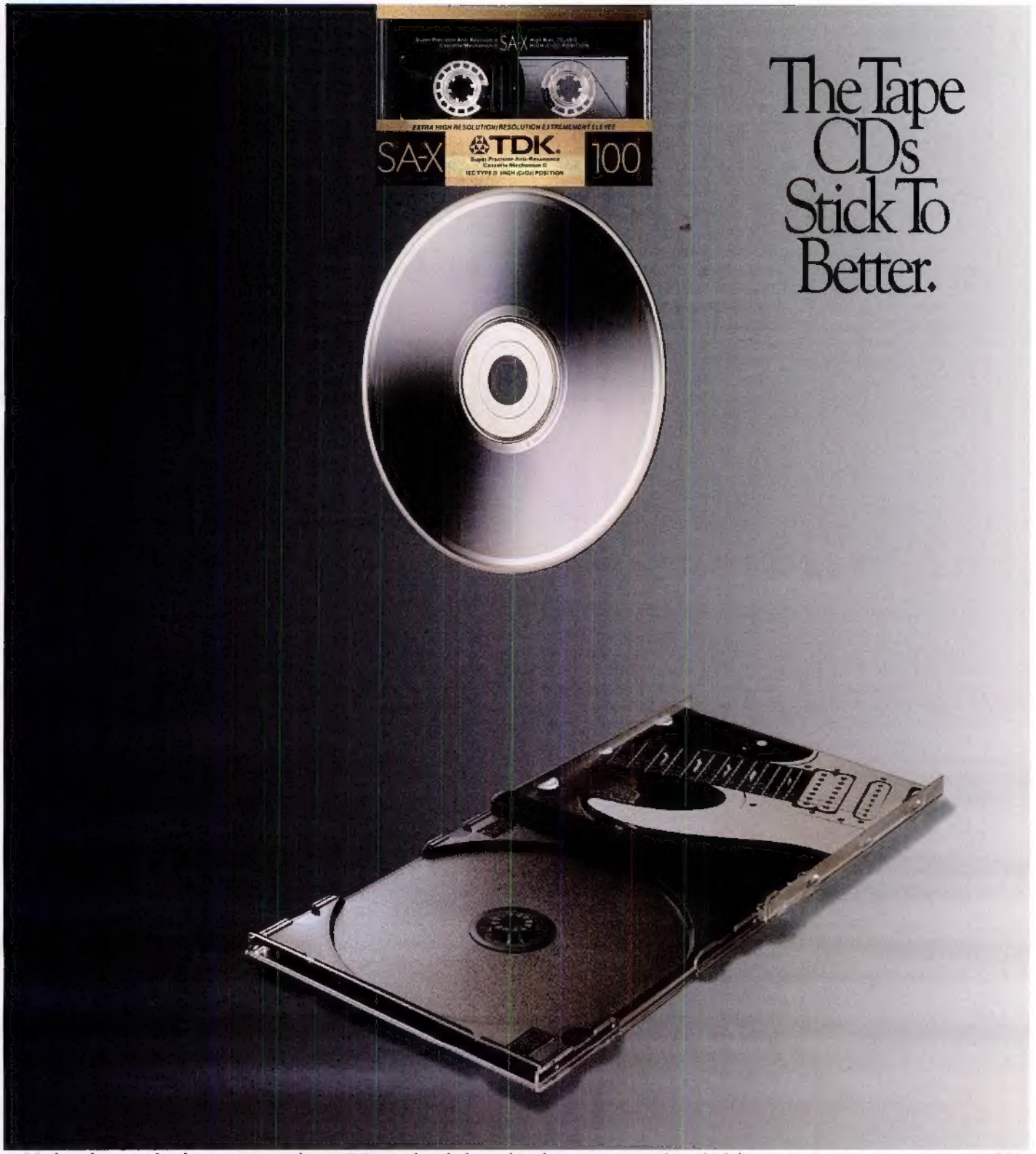

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TOP SPIN

INSANITY IS AN ONION with an infinite number of skins, the removal of each of which spirals us toward an ever-intensifying absurdity. By acquitting 2 Live Crew at their obscenity trial, the six-member jury restored some sanity to society, while illustrating a delicious piece of comic madness: The jurors found 2 Live Crew's music to be art. They must be the only six people in America who think that, but luckily for us they do.

"As the cross section of the community that we are, it [the music] was just not obscene," said 24-year-old jury foreman David Garsow, who went on to say, "People in everyday society use those words," a simple and clear truth that evades—or maybe inspires—the witch-hunters like the prosecutors of this case. But if this music is not obscene, then what is? I mean, we may, though we haven't yet, invent profane words that Luther Campbell hasn't rapped, but it's unlikely we'll invent new body parts Campbell hasn't rapped about. Even a retired 65-year-old white woman juror, hardly the Crew's core audience, declared the group was "expressing their inner feelings; we felt it had some art in it," adding, "We should have the freedom to speak and say the things we feel. The day we can't we're in big trouble." Another woman, at 76 the oldest of the jurors, told the press she thought 2 Live Crew were "thumbing their noses back" at society, a harmless and legally protected thing to do. So if the raps on *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* aren't obscene, as judged by a jury of 2 Live Crew's peers, or at least neighbors, then does that mean nothing is obscene? It should.

Obscenity is, finally, an abstract—except when it's a criminal conviction. Then it's a pretty serious load on your plate. But it should be an abstract, nothing more; a definition of a value deemed essential enough for someone to express it, and offensive to someone else. As an abstract, society can deal with it, without pain (if not without fuss). Whether it's rude rap or rock songs, or erotica in men's magazines, "obscenity" is a harmless and perhaps useful noun for scientifically proven harmless material. As a tangible crime eliciting tangible punishment, it becomes a powerful mechanism of suppression. That's why people who value free speech so vigorously fight those who are clearly afraid of it. 2 Live Crew have been the battleground more than the actual battle, and the triumph (in this case) commemorates them but rewards everyone.

2 Live Crew have been the battleground more than the actual battle, and the triumph (in this case) commemorates them but rewards everyone.

2 Live Crew's victory—which hopefully will result in a successful appeal for Charles Freeman, the Florida record store owner convicted for selling a copy of *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* to an adult undercover cop—was foretold to me by the moral-crusading lawyer, Jack Thompson, who started this whole mess in the first place. We were having dinner with some students following our debate at Southern Illinois University. I asked him how he expected the case to go. Glumly, he told me the prosecution would lose, because "Nick-at-Night" Navarro, as Thompson called the publicity-addicted Broward County sheriff whose deputies arrested 2 Live Crew, wanted to lose.

Navarro, figured Thompson, wanted and got the kudos for busting the rappers, but didn't want the political fallout from helping to create censorship, so he so inadequately gathered evidence that the case wasn't winnable.

Jack Thompson is the enemy but he's not the devil. He's intelligent, rational, and sincere in his beliefs and motives. But intelligent, rational, and sincere people are no less dangerous than mad ones when driving a truck the wrong way down a crowded street, which is what I believe Thompson's crusade is analogous to. And I don't feel it's opinion, but fact, that Thompson is going the wrong way: He advocates the prohibition of information, which goes against everything this country stands for. Unlike the charlatans who popularized the notion that rock and rap were corroding American society—people like Jimmy Swaggart, Tipper Gore, and Donald Wildmon, who all clearly had their own cynical agendas—Jack Thompson is a sort of latter-day Don Quixote, as equally at odds with his times as the mythical character was, no less confused or well-intentioned but less benign. A recent editorial Thompson wrote in *Billboard* was full of desperate threats. He alluded to a vengeful government that was right behind him, to vanquish the Luther Campbells and Axl Roses (and for reasons all his own, Sinéad O'Connor and Frank Zappa, too) who he, for now, rode alone against, wearing into this ridiculous battle the imagined colors of aggrieved parents everywhere.

His editorial incited the record industry, achieving two things he wanted to, I think: pissing everyone off and compounding his celebrity. Actually there was something pathetically plaintive about it, which was the result of its very earnestness: When all is said and done, he is fighting windmills he thinks are dragons. Finally, his campaign will have no more impact than that.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

JON RAGEL

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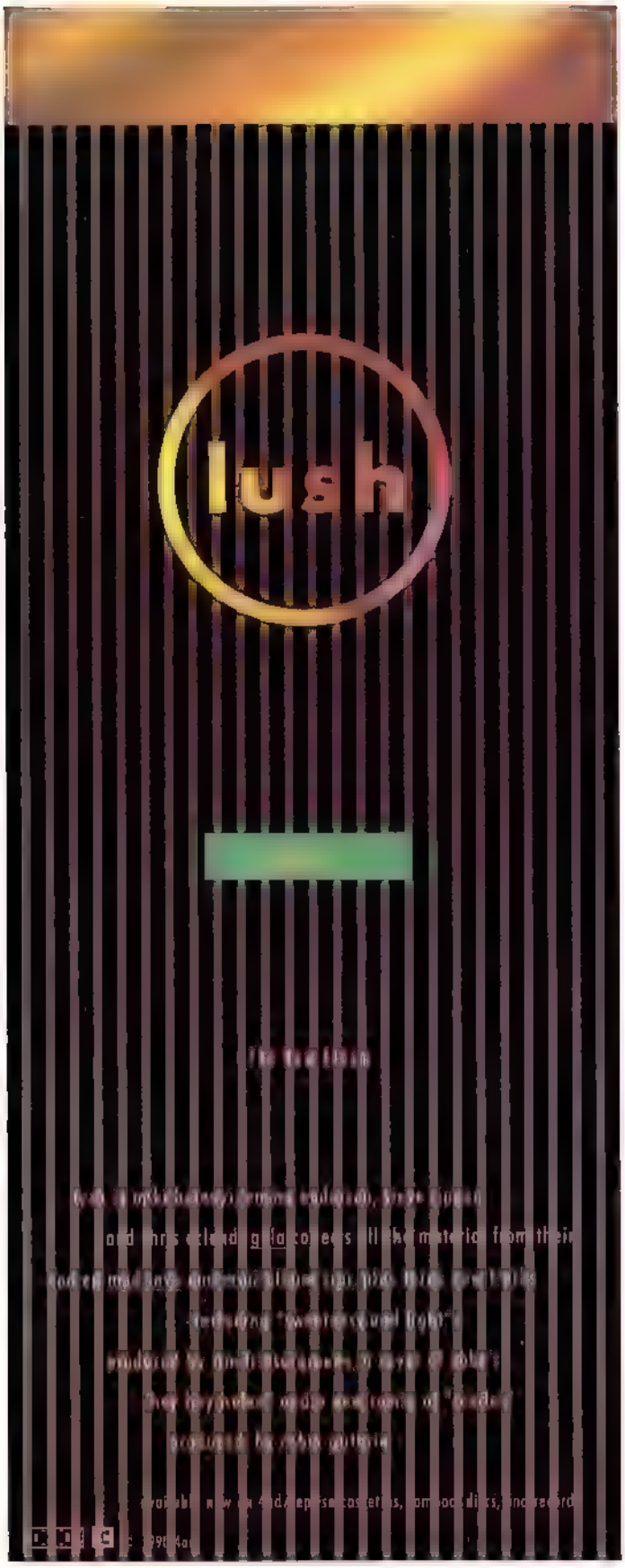

POINT BLANK LETTERS

EDITED BY NATHANIEL WICE

Editor's note: The October issue, guest-edited by Spike Lee, provoked an unusual volume of reader mail. Below are just a few of the letters we received.

When Spike Lee said the October issue would be the blackest ever [Topspin, October '90], did he really mean the most antiwhite?

Kate Milenski
Adams, Massachusetts

Thank you, Mr. Spike Lee, for such an excellent issue of my favorite rag!

Bill James
Richmond, Virginia

You may say I don't understand, but I'll die trying to figure it all out.

One of "Them,"
Dallas Durst
Columbus, Ohio

So Spike Lee considers black Celtic fans such as myself Uncle Toms? If I am a Tom for rooting for the first NBA team to draft a black player in the first round and the first team to start five black players, then what does Lee consider himself for rooting for the Mets, a team that in its entire history never carried more than five blacks at a time? In 1986 when both teams won it all, Boston had four blacks on a 12-man roster; the Mets had four on a roster twice as big.

Bill Panzardo
Paterson, New Jersey

Let me tell you the difference between Chuck D and Harry Allen. Chuck is the guy who told SPIN [Flash, March '90] that "3rd Bass is a good example of people just being people. Serch is not going around pretending he's black—he's saying, 'Brothers is kicking it, and I'm out there kicking it with them.' I respect Serch for his ability to understand the black situation."

Harry is the guy who attacked Serch a few months later at the New Music Seminar for using the word *we*, as in the sentence, "*We've* got to protect our music."

That's why I don't buy this bit in SPIN ["Black II Black," October '90]—supposedly co-authored by Harry and Chuck—about me "reading Malcolm, thinking I'm black, and then criticizing [Public Enemy]." Chuck D—who gave us the "jackass theory" ("Just Acting Caucasian Kills a Simple Solution, the simple solution is that everybody acts human")—knows why he has so many white fans, and should also know what P.E. and Malcolm X mean to white kids who've grown up surrounded by black culture and black people.

No, it sounds a lot more like Harry Allen, the hip hop wacktivist and media ass. Dr. Allen, who humbly calls himself "hip hop's leading authority," has made a career out of rushing everyone with his Superblack bag, perhaps because he's so insecure about his own identity. Harry disses city kids like Serch, who was getting his street knowledge in the projects while Harry lived in the suburbs. Harry wears that Muslim *kufi* damn near every day, yet he's a practicing Seventh Day Adventist. Harry says he's the only person to grow up on hip hop and write about it, which is a lie. (What about Bönz Malone? Havilock Nelson?) Harry says white journalists can't write effectively about P.E., but it's his job to arrange for white journalists to see Chuck. He got me my interview. Thanks, Har.

If white supremacy is a white problem, Harry, then white attitudes have to change. Changing attitudes means absorbing as much information as possible, reading Malcolm, Farrakhan, Welsing, and then defining ourselves through expression. In my article, I criticized myself for expecting Chuck D to be "the next Malcolm X." Chuck himself said, "I don't

Chuck D: separatist or savior?

RUSSEL WYNTER

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claim to give anybody political sophistication. I think you're looking for too much in a rap album." Does it strike you as funny or insecure that a white person could hope that hip hop artists might complete Malcolm's mission? It's a white thing, Harry; I wouldn't expect you to understand

If it'll take an ass-whipping from Chuck D to prove I'm down to take blows for the cause, then cool, because I love and respect the man. As for you, Harry, I saw your ass on 126th Street and you fronted. Sowhatchusayin'?

Dan Charnas
New York, New York

I admire Chuck D's pride ["Black II Black," October '90], and think he is a talented artist, but I must laugh when he invokes Malcolm X. He never engaged in Chuck's brand of name-calling and paranoia. Malcolm fought with intelligence and honesty. He preached self-respect to African-Americans, and he renounced Elijah Muhammad just as he would renounce Louis Farrakhan today. This integrity made him a target for the right wing. Men like Chuck D, Al Sharpton, and Spike Lee will never be the target of assassination attempts because they aren't really threatening to the people who run this country. They are cartoon characters.

Malcolm X was a threat to the status quo.

Mickey Z
Long Island City, New York

Hey Chuck [D], I love the idea of makin' copies of your seriously potent, important, about-time article, but, well, I'm white and my live-in lover is black. Does this mean she has to put a copy on the door and I have to put another copy over my side of the bed? Just curious.

Peace

Michael J. Casadonte
Detroit, Michigan

I'm a third-generation Caucasian of Filipino/Armenian/English/German descent. Neither I nor anyone in my family has ever owned a slave, burned a cross, or walked softly through the system. I personally am no stranger to welfare, food stamps, and unemployment. At present I have bills stacked to the ceiling, and nobody's telling me I don't have to pay them. I even get nervous around the police. Luckily I have my white supremacy hobby to keep me busy, or else I'd swear that the system was kicking my ass as well.

It's your show, fellas, and I probably shouldn't try to bum-rush it. But the next time you get an entire issue to "celebrate African-American culture," try not to spend so much time talking about white people.

Vance Carnaga
Charlotte, North Carolina

My friend Doug says, "I can't wait for this black thing to fade away just like disco did." You're treating this social condition as a marketing fad.

Erik B.
San Ramon, California

I am white and I'm not a bad person, so why do I feel so terrible after reading the October issue?

G H.
Chicago, Illinois

Unfortunately, I know demonization of white men won't stop with words. I recently had my jaw fractured by a black man for no other reason than I was walking down Telegraph in Berkeley with my fiancée Valeria, a black woman. I'm beyond anger. I want to know, is there a way out of this hatred?

'Nuff respect to Spike, Chuck, et al, for manning the Afrocentric fort, but how about droppin' some science for those of us clearing space in the middle?

Gregory Stephens
Berkeley, California

I don't like niggers. I like blacks. There's a difference. I sympathize with repressed blacks. It's not fair, but forcing this whole thing down our throats makes people hate more. Like me—now!

Let's work together.

Scott Nosenko
Phoenix, Arizona

Yo Spike, you could fit your shit in a Dixie cup—I don't see you saying we could get the sisters together, we could get Maya Angelou to collaborate with us, we could bring up the

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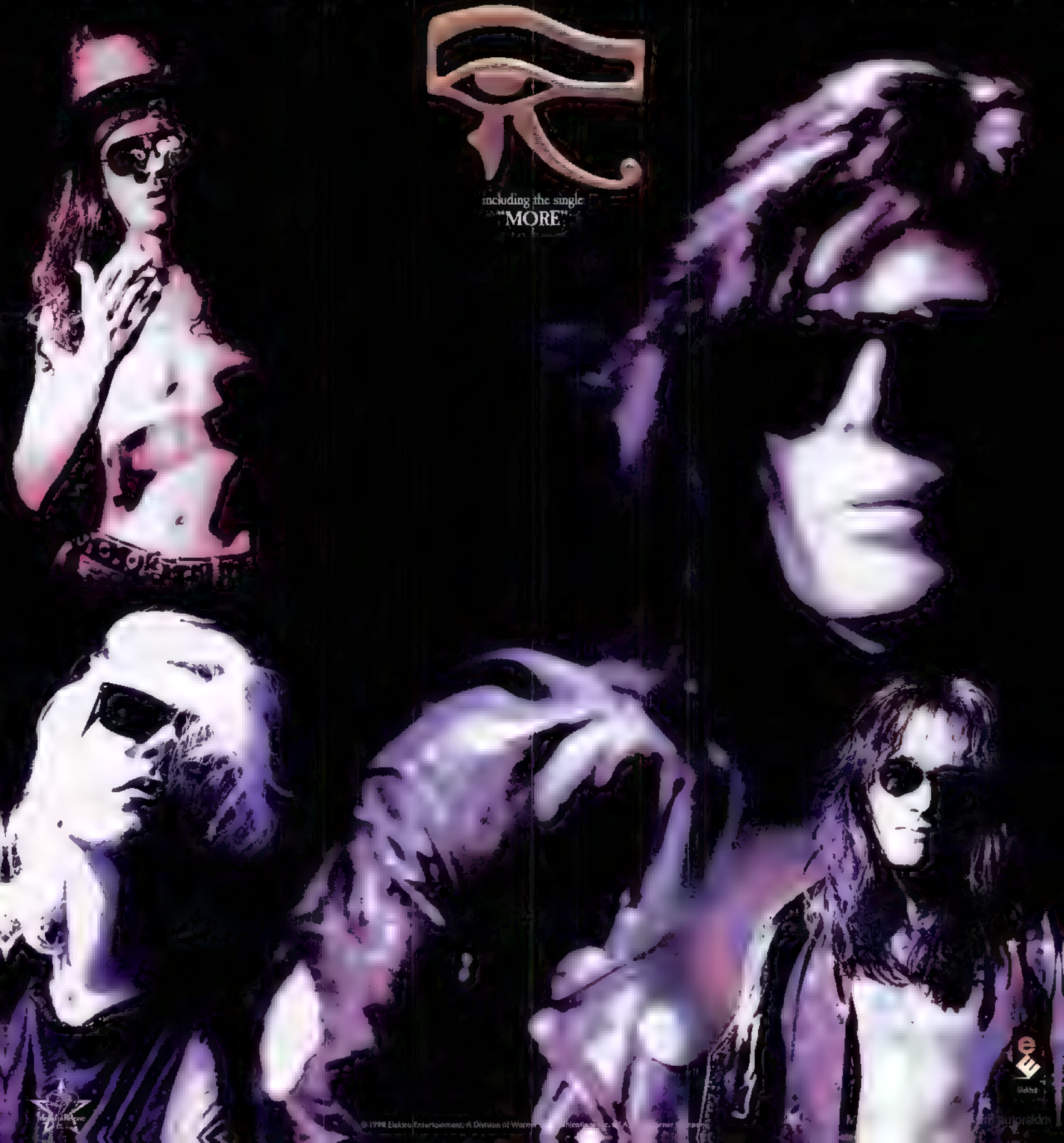

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sisters. You sound like a whining bag of dirt, when you should be an enlightened squirt. Take the thumbtack out of your mind, son—put up another *note*: Brothers and sisters united get shit done.

Stay black, stay strong,
Quendrith Johnson
Sister from another planet
Boston, Massachusetts

Spike Lee Spike Lee
Cold-fuckin' up the scene
Spike Lee Spike Lee
On the white man's magazine
Spike Lee Spike Lee
Tryin' to prove to you and me
Spike Lee Spike Lee
That he's as black as can be
Spike Lee Spike Lee
Is confused as ever
Spike Lee Spike Lee
And it's about that time
Spike Lee Spike Lee
We pull that lever
To put Spike Lee
Out of his misery
To snuff him out
Like a pimple or acne
He made a free choice
And chose to do the White Thing
Just plain sellin' out
Is that the right thing?

Fuck peace,
MC Rage
Placentia, California

I would not have liked the issue even if it were all white, brown, or purple.

George LeClaire
Des Plaines, Illinois

Spike, take off your stupid hats. Your head, it's too big for them anyway.

Kathy Krochko
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Well, Spike Lee sure squeezed your balls and ran! His face is on the cover, he got a full-page ad for his movie, and his sister got her obligatory interview.

Todd Deasy
New Lisbon, Wisconsin

With just one issue, Spike Lee managed to turn a predominantly Anglo-Saxon/European publication into an outstanding collection of articles on, about, and by black Americans. How we think, act, and present ourselves was summed up better than any black-owned, -written, or -staffed publication on the open market has ever been able to accomplish in 12, 20, or 30 issues. SPIN should be congratulated for their courage and trust in letting Spike Lee do the thing with the magazine. I hope this isn't the last issue of its kind. Bravo! Bravo! Encore. Encore.

On the other hand, don't forget that blacks can be racists, too. Show me a human being that isn't a racist and I'll introduce you to artificial intelligence.

Karen Marie Williams
Washington, D.C.

Spike, can I have my job back?

I am a 30-year-old African-American who read your magazine when it was "underground" and controversial. Within the last two years the issues have became boring and oriented toward heavy metal and rap. I stopped reading.

But I read the October issue. Thank you for taking the risk.

Linda Jackson
Ardmore, Pennsylvania

At first reading of the October issue, I thought that Spike Lee was racist for believing that all white people are. Maybe he is proud of this, I thought. Then I went back and reread Topspin. Now I understand what Lee's really about: "Let's start relying more on ourselves."

As one of "them," let me say that I'm not sure Lee is for racial harmony, but if he can instigate change to make this country a better place for blacks, more power to him. Peace to Lee, too.

Patricia A. McKeon
Bardonia, New York

If I wanted to subscribe to *Jet*, I would have subscribed to *Jet*.

Ken Cook
St. Charles, Missouri

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FLASH

EDITED BY FRANK OWEN

Caucasians on a mission, the Young Black Teenagers are a controversial group that undermine the assumption that white boys can't rap.

Young Black Teenagers, *clockwise from top*: Tommy Never, Firstborn, Kamron, Skribble, and ATA.

Material chronionymi prawem autorskim

WHITES

It's Sunday morning and my hip hop show is in full effect on Berkeley, California's KALX, 90.7 FM. "Yo folks, I got something brand new comin' straight at ya," I announce. "This is a group produced by Public Enemy's Hank Shocklee called the Young Black Teenagers, and here's their new jam, 'Proud to Be Black.' Give me a call and tell me what you think." Some 30 seconds into the song, the switchboard lights up. The responses for the most part are positive. As the song ends, I inform the listeners that the Young Black Teenagers are not of African descent, but are actually five white guys. At that point the tone of the calls markedly changes. Comments range from "Yo, that song sucks" to "Those are white boys rappin'? That's ill. I don't like the song."

The $64,000 question for that morning—one that was angrily asked—was "Why are five white guys calling themselves Young Black Teenagers, and how can they be proud to be black?" I put this question to Bill Stephney, a co-owner of Soul Records (YBT's label) and one of the chief architects of the Public Enemy concept. Certainly a man of Stephney's stature, whose Afrocentric perspectives have earned him much respect, would not pander to shocking and offensive exploits. But then again, he and his company are known for being controversial. Not surprisingly, Stephney sees nothing wrong with YBT. He says the group sees itself as the product of a black planet. Along with thousands of other white youths, its members have grown up in the hip hop generation at a time when many of America's biggest cultural icons—Michael Jordan, Spike Lee, Arsenio, Bobby Brown, Living Colour, Bill Cosby, and M.C. Hammer, to name a few—are black. As a result, many white kids publicly acknowledge and embrace African-American culture.

"In the communities where I was raised," says YBT rapper Kamron (King Aries Mack Ruler of Nuckleheads), "whatever I did—how I lived, talked, and dressed—I was considered as being so-called black." Kamron explains that he and the group's other members, Tommy Never, Firstborn, and DJs ATA (Attitude Times Ability) and Skribble, grew up in black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods and are true hip hoppers who've been down with the music almost all their lives.

When questioned about the group's currently popular song, "Proud to Be Black," Kamron points out that folks misunderstand the lyrics. The track kicks off with YBT informing the audience that its members are "born of the Caucasian persuasion," and then goes on to challenge the presumption that only African Americans can rap.

As sincere as its attempts are to challenge stereotypes, the group continues to come under fire. Black folks will simply not tolerate white boys calling themselves Young Black Teenagers while participating in a musical genre that thus far has inspired so much black awareness, culture, and pride. Many take it as an insult. This is especially true now that rap is increasingly coming under racist "censorship" attacks. Kamron counters by stating that it's not YBT's intention to start a race riot. "We gotta hit people straight up in order to get them to pay attention," he says. "We want to show that both sides are receiving criticism and going through hardships and there are a whole lot of Young Black Teenagers out there. We want to help solve the problem by getting people to not judge a book by its cover."

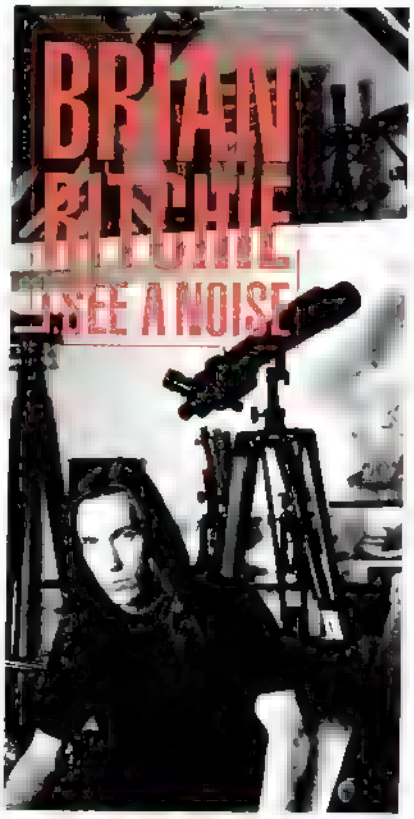
Bill Stephney contends that at the very least, YBT will spark dialogue and debate. "If anything," he says, "they will make African people in this country question what the term *black* really means. Is it an extension of *nigger*? Is it an extension of *Negro*? Is it an extension of *colored*? If you look back to the '60s when the term *black* was thrown about, was it romantic 'revolutionary-ism' or was it a redefinition of our African heritage? Because blackness has nothing to do with African."

Stephney explains that black people in this country have two experiences: African and European. "The European experience comes from our oppression," he says, "so for us to completely lay exclusivity to our culture is kinda stupid. We speak the oppressor's language. We wear the clothing of the oppressor. We go to the oppressor's school, watch his television, use his inventions and everything else. Our culture is not pure. Since we live in a mongrel society, at what point do we question those who are called African-Americans yet practice Europeanism? For those who are uneducated about the retention of African culture, their West African culture, where they come from—of course they're going to get mad about the Teenagers."

But putting the rhetoric aside, how's the music? Are YBT hittin' or hype? To tell the truth, the boys aren't bad. Based upon their two current songs, "Proud to Be Black" and "Nobody Knows Kelly," a humorous tribute to Kelly Bundy, a character from Fox Television's *Married With Children*, the Teenagers prove they can rhyme a helluva lot better than some folks currently out on the market. Their debut album, *Young Black Teenagers*, is slammin'. One cut is entitled "Daddy Called Me a Nigger 'Cause I Like to Rhyme." Kamron says it's a song that deals with parents poisoned by racism. Let's hope these racist ways haven't been inherited by their children, YBT's peers, who can't get past the shock value of the name and thus won't give the record a fair listen.

David Cook

GREG WATERMAN



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BASH

Run-D.M.C., *Back From Hell* (Profile). Ignore the feeble new jack swing/R&B attempts—the hip hop homeboys from Hollis are back with a straightforward, stripped down, full-force rap attack. Harks back to the early days when the trio set new standards in the now-familiar genre. (Blackwell.)

Hindu Love Gods, *Hindu Love Gods* (Giant). Three-fourths of R.E.M. and excitable boy Warren Zevon team up for this tour de force side project of mostly rootsy/bluesy covers (Robert Johnson, Willie Dixon, Woody Guthrie). Their brilliant, power-guitar version of "Raspberry Beret" is enough to make Prince turn purple. (Blackwell)

Chainsaw Kittens, *Violent Religion* (Mammoth). The Smiths meet the New York Dolls meet the Devil. The Kittens apply their makeup better than most girls, and play postpunkish guitar pop better than most boys. Which should make them a big hit on the college dating/music circuit. (Greer)

HEAVY

STAFF SELECTIONS

Wartime, *Fast Food for Thought* (Chrysalis). Music by Andrew Weiss (Gone, Regressive Aid) and words by Henry Rollins. Kind of a post-hardcore dance party—the Beastie Boys crossbred with Black Flag—but better. Emphasis is on the dense, sample-free mix rather than the vocals. Ace cover of the Grateful Dead's "Franklin's Tower" to boot. (Greer)

Reverend Al Sharpton and Lenora Fulani, *In Babylon Volume I, The Battle of New York City* (Castle International). A new recipe for revolutionary art. Reggae beats and samples from standards like "Fight the Power" and "U Can't Touch This" fill out speeches by Al Sharpton and New Alliance spokesperson Lenora Fulani. More interesting as a revolt against pop than as a popular revolt. (Wice)

The Cure, *Mixed Up* (Elektra). Dance your butts off. That's the theme of this collection of remixed Cure classics overseen by a few of clubland's DJ maestros. Cue it up for a psychedelic version of "Fascination Street" and other techno-treats. And don't forget to check out the new track, "Never Enough." (Spencer)

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FLASH

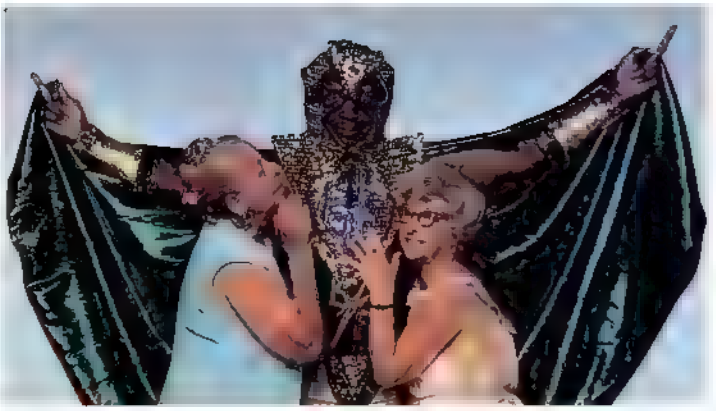
THE ORIGINAL RAPPER

A down-and-dirty freak, Blowfly is a major influence in contemporary hip hop.

Before there was a 2 Live Crew—before there was hip hop, for that matter—there was Blowfly, performing X-rated songs with a funky groove. Born 45 years ago in Cochran, Georgia, Miami's Clarence Reid has recorded more than 40 albums during his illustrious career. He got his nickname as a child when his grandmother, after hearing him sing dirty versions of then popular songs—I ke "Suck My Dick" for "Do the Twist"—proclaimed, "You is nastier than a blowfly."

In reality, there's a split personality involved in this man's music: there's Blowfly, the outrageously garbed creator of trash classics like "Shittin' on the Dock of the Bay" and "Porno Freak," and then there's Clarence Reid, who has recorded more than a dozen "clean" albums over the years and has penned songs for the likes of Wilson Pickett, K.C. and the Sunshine Band, Gwen McRae, Betty Wright, and Sam and Dave.

Many people cite Blowfly as being the first rapper with his 1965 "Rap Dirty" record, which was rerecorded for disco giants TK. Records after the smash success of Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight." Blowfly himself credits the "soul talking" Southern radio DJs of the '50s and '60s as the pioneers of rap, but he is without dispute the first rapper to have a song banned, after an Alabama record store was busted for peddling "Porno Freak." Blowfly was also sued by the president of ASCAP for his "What a Difference a Lay Makes." (The music publishing honcho also happened to be the composer of the popular "What a Difference a Day Makes.")



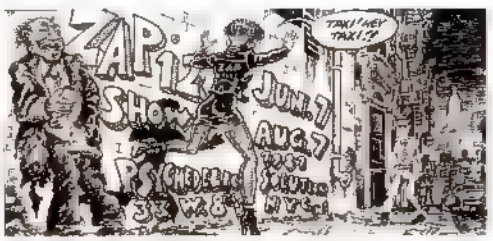
Blowfly is as nasty as he wants to be.

Blowfly's sounds are a staple of modern-day hip hop. His music has been sampled by many rappers, including his buddies 2 Live Crew.

This year Blowfly hooked up with Fishbone's Fish and Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist/wild man Flea to record "Shake Your Thang" (clean) backed with "Shake Your Ass" (X-rated), both of which are included on the soundtrack of Blow's new film, *The Twisted World of Blowfly*.

Over the years, Blowfly's seen a lot of his contemporaries fall by the wayside. His survival can partially be credited to the fact that while Blowfly is totally wacked in the head, Reid is a God-fearing, Bible-carrying Christian. "I never drink, never smoke, and I never use drugs," confesses Reid. "I may go to hell, but it won't be for those things!"

Steven Blush



ART WORLD WIG-OUT

Psychedelic Solution is a New York art gallery dedicated to all things mind-expanding.

In 1986, the doors opened on what has since established itself as one of the most bizarre, eccentric, and daring art galleries to infect the New York cultural scene. Called Psychedelic Solution, this head shop for the eye shows no signs of straying from its unflinchingly demented path of housing only the most marginal and subversive artwork. By systematically avoiding that which is particularly hip and marketable in the art world, Psychedelic Solution has emerged as a successful arena of totally mind-fuck visual and conceptual creativity. It has articulated the collective sensibility of altered vision outside the status quo, helping to keep track of and pay homage to a largely overlooked, dismissed, or forgotten alternate history born and bred in the underground subculture of the '60s.

Over the years the gallery has displayed exhibitions of unconventional artists. Rick Griffin, for example, is one of the founders of the legendary *Zap Comics*, a contributor to the seminal *Surf* magazine, and a famed figure of the psychedelic art scene who produced numerous concert posters for Hendrix, the Who, Janis Joplin, and the Doors in the '60s, as well as album-cover art for Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, the Cult, and Quicksilver Messenger Service. Mark Mothersbaugh, best known as cofounder of the band Devo, is an awesome visual artist in his own right. The Church of Subgenius, a demented mock religion that has spawned a syndicated radio show, a regular comic book, and a "church" magazine called *Stark Fist of Removal*, has also exhibited at Psychedelic Solution, as has Robert Williams, another *Zap* alumnus who as art director for Ed "Big Daddy" Roth Studios in the late '60s became an inestimable force in the hot rod car customizing scene of southern California, but is perhaps best known today for his psychosexual-fantasy album covers produced for Guns N' Roses and Flesh Volcano.

"I suppose I should be proud that we do this," says gallery owner Jacaeber Kastor. "But I'm also horrified at how pathetic it is that —except for maybe La Luz de Jesus Gallery in L.A.—there's no one else doing it. There's a large body of important artwork out there that remains generally unrepresented, and at this point, I guess we're still the only place for certain artists."

Carlo McCormick

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DRUG WAR UPDATE

Every week in southern California, an elite group of U.S. military officers huddle for war game "exercises" with representatives from a dozen law-enforcement agencies. A typical battle plan begins with an invasion from the Southwest. The military responds with a massive sea, air, and land border "lock down." Then the military assists local and state police forces in arresting the thousands of U.S. citizens who are enemies. Welcome to the drug war, Pentagon-style.

At the southern California-based National Interagency Counternarcotics Institute, military surveillance specialists who work with the DEA, the FBI, and others, practice domestic war-game scenarios. A transcript from the first war game, held last fall, outlines a chilling militarization of U.S. law enforcement.

After the lock down, suspects who are caught are "debriefed" and then used as informants to feed information to the military. Planes that attempt to enter the Southwest without military permission will be surrounded by fighter jets. Then, as the foreign drug supply dries up, the military turn its surveillance inward. Drug rehabilitation centers and hospitals around the country are monitored. Domestic drug labs are raided. The plan stresses the need for the "maximum use of search warrants and entry teams."

The military warned Congress not to let this happen. In August 1988, Marine Commandant Alfred Gray, Jr. outlined the consequences of a Pentagon-run drug war. "It's going to get violent," he testified. "If you want to call this a war, then all wars end up somewhat uncivilized. People get killed and locked away. We need to keep this in mind." Congress ignored the warnings and presented the Pentagon with two things it could not refuse: an order to proceed and $300 million spending money.

Despite their initial qualms, military leaders are sure they can win the war. "There's nothing magic or secret about winning the [drug] war," said Gray. "The hearts and minds of people and all of that. It's harder to do in a democratic environment, I can tell you that, but it can be done. And we know how to do it."

Jonathan Franklin

news special

DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN RAPPER

D-Boy, Dallas's most successful Christian rapper, was recently shot and killed while driving through his hometown. The rapper recorded for Frontline, a Christian record label which features thrash, rap, speed metal, and gospel. D-Boy was an activist and counselor in Dallas's gang-ridden community. He had just finished recording his second album, *The Lyrical Strength of One Street Poet*.

D-Boy: killed by a shot in the dark.

D-Boy's parents founded Street Church Academy, an organization dedicated to stopping gang violence in major cities. The rapper's mother, father, and sister work as counselors in the group—just as D-Boy did. His mother, Cookie Rodriguez, is known as the Mother Teresa of gangs.

"D-Boy was so well-loved," says Michael Black, the rapper's publicist. "He was thought of as a brother. He didn't have enemies, he was neutral ground." Thousands of people, many of them gang members, came to his funeral.

The facts surrounding his early-morning murder are sketchy—no one knows for sure if it was gang-related. The Sunday after her son was killed, Cookie called a meeting at Street Church, begging others, "Please, please, do *not* take any action." She also called for a "ceasefire of all gangs."

D-Boy's new single, "Cease for Peace," is a call to stop the gang violence in Dallas. Black describes the gang situation as "atrocious; the police estimate over 100 gangs in Dallas alone. We've lost a lot of youth. Often the only way to get out of a gang is to convert to Christianity, but you better be serious. Leaving a gang is never easy, but if someone became a Christian through D-Boy's ministry, they respected *that*." On "Cease for Peace," D-Boy encourages a gang member to come to church with him. The gang member wants to do right, but says, "Oh, I'll go next Sunday." The next sound you hear is gunshots.

Staci Bonner

Rock'n'Roll Hall of Shame

It's been over four years since it was announced that Cleveland was to be the home of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. Since then, the only physical representation of the hall has been a billboard placed on the proposed site that read, Future Home of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Now even the sign is gone, and all Cleveland has to show for the approximately $48 million in public and corporate funding provided for the museum are the assurances of the New York-based Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation that the hall will indeed be built there.

Reports of dissension between Cleveland leaders and the New York group have been denied by both sides. But some say that certain members of the New York faction are decidedly anti-Cleveland and that they are trying to get the project moved to a more attractive city.

The most recent point of contention was the New York group's discovery that a retail record store had opened in the new Tower City shopping mall in the landmark Terminal Tower concourse. Since the group had plans to include a retail record store in the hall, another phase of the same Tower City development, it viewed the other store as direct competition.

The hall's officials, however, claimed the real problem was that the group had decided the Tower City site might be too small for future expansion of the project. At press time, the two camps still hadn't come to an agreement as to whether they were going to continue planning at Tower City or move the project to a different Cleveland location.

By now the grass-roots support that convinced the New York group to come to Cleveland in the first place has dwindled to the point of apathy. What's going on with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame? The answer seems to be, Your guess is as good as mine.

Mark Holan

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THE COLD ROCK STUFF

The Beer of Love

A new aphrodisiac beer from France just may render the phrase "too drunk to fuck" obsolete and add deeper meaning to the age-old line, "Can I buy you a drink?" The beer, 36/15 Pecheur: La Biere Amoureuse, utilizes plant and herb extracts in a fruity-tasting formula that, according to its manufacturer, will "create between lovers a new attraction" and "open the doors for a more romantic, more sensual relationship." Does it really work? Just ask the two SPIN editors who fell in love with two beautiful French journalists at the beer's introductory press conference. Me so—*burp*—horny

Platform Shoes

Platform shoes never really went out of style with certain shorter rock stars, but Deee-Lite has revived them as a fashion totem. Now *Seventeen* is featuring them in fashion photos and soles are thickening at Fayva, once again giving short people a reason to live. Is it recombinant fashion or just an environmentalist recycling of all the clothes in the attic? At this rate, skinny ties should return around 1992.

Tales of the Beanworld

For 15 years, Larry Marder has nurtured the comic book *Tales of the Beanworld*. Against a fine-tuned fantasy ecology, the experiences of Professor Garbanzo, Beanish, and the other legumes feel as old and as true as many classic folk tales. Readers create their own meaning—even their own merchandising. At conventions, Marder gives out free comics and Beanworld Action Figures, which are lima beans with two dots for eyes. If he runs out, fans can make their own figures at home. *(Tales of the Beanworld is available for $2.25 from Eclipse, P.O. Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436.)*

Nicholson Baker

As our culture flashes by on fast - forward, Nicholson Baker is the only novelist lingering over the details that make up our lives, ranging from the history of milk cartons to the joys of perforation. Each of his wise, funny books happens in less than an hour—*Room Temperature* during a baby's feeding; *The Mezzanine* during a lunch hour. Both novels tell the story of our society with free association and footnotes, footnotes, footnotes

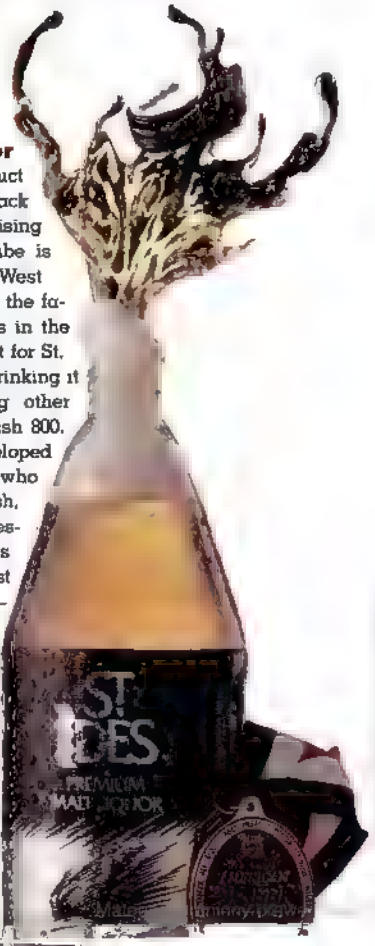
DAT past its prime before its time?

Beyond DAT

Digital audio tape (DAT) spent the last half of the '80s collecting brownie points as the Next Big Technology while it fended off lawsuits from home taping paranoid American record companies. But who needs DAT, anyway? Phillips has a tape deck brewing that can play either digital tape or your old analog collection; rewritable CDs lurk just over the horizon. Now that Sony owns CBS Records—and if Matsushita grabs MCA—these high-tech goodies should fly through customs.

St. Ides Malt Liquor

Since malt liquor is a product normally targeted at the black community, it's not surprising that rap superstar Ice Cube is hawking St. Ides, a new West Coast brew fast becoming the favorite of New York homies in the know. In his rap radio spot for St. Ides, the Cube boasts of drinking it every day, while dissing other brews such as Olde English 800. Actually, St. Ides was developed by the same master brewer who came up with Olde English, and Joe Harkins, a spokesman for St. Ides - which its brewer claims to be the most powerful beer in America—insists that the Cube is "not a big drinker." The 21-year-old gangsta is, however, a shrewd businessman. "I can't tell you how much he got [for doing the ads]," says Harkins, "but he's talking of retiring at 25."



PLATFORM SHOES: MICHAEL HALSBAND

Compiled by

Bob Mack,

Gavin Edwards,

Mark Blackwell,

and Frank Owen.

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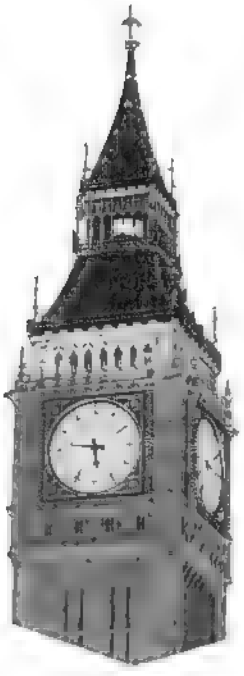

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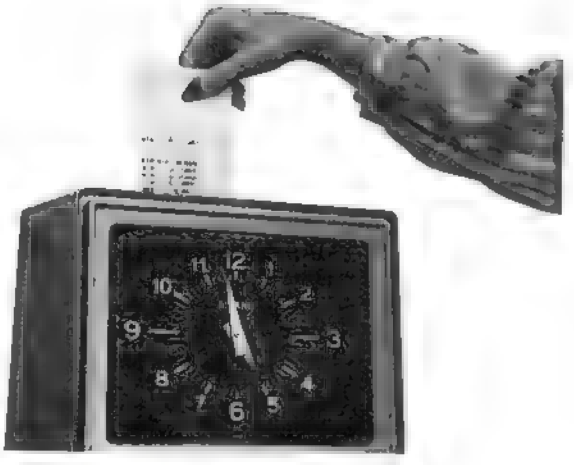

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NEW MUSIC PREVIEW

All the new music that's fit to hear: the sounds, the scenes, the styles, and the signposts.

CHRISTOPHER GALLO

We are at the end of rock history. The concept of new music is finished. All that's gonna be said has already been said. All that's left is an endless recycling of past styles, sounds, gestures, attitudes, and subjectivities. Oh, yeah?

Tell that to the Bay Area thrash-funkateers, or to the British indie dance bands, or to Deee-Lite, Danzig, Monie Love, Brand Nubian, Alice in Chains, and all the other awe-inspiring artists that make up SPIN's New Music Preview '91.

In 1991, rock, hip hop, and house are still the only art forms that matter. While the rest of the culture finds the past impossible to evade—to the point that art and nostalgia are synonymous—popular music thrives, despite the best efforts of Nick Tosches, Kurt Loder, and Jean Baudrillard. That's why new music is still important.

Most of the bands featured here are, in SPIN colleague Simon Reynolds's phrase, post-postmodernists. If postmodernism in pop has come to mean a cynical regurgitation of pop's past, the hegemony of the eye over the ear and the triumph of style over content, then these music makers are a reaction against all that. Whether they pledge allegiance to rock'n'roll paganism (like Danzig), to an African-American version of Islam (like Brand Nubian), or to the New Positivity (like Deee-Lite), these bands have something to say—without the quotation marks—and a neat way of saying it. This is music that's not aware in advance of its place in history.

Most of the bands here are also musical miscegenists. The days of strict racial demarcation between metal and funk, rock and rap, college rock and house, are nearing their end. In the world of sound, color is irrelevant (except when it comes to getting paid, of course).

What's old in new music is the shock of the new. (None of these bands are the new Stones or the new Pistols, thank God.) What's still new is the shock of the now.

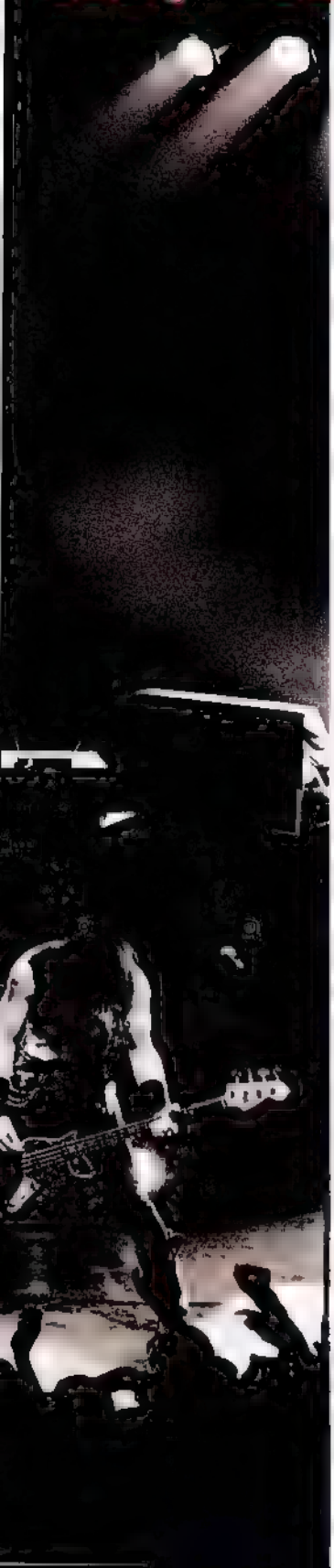
To borrow a hip hop phrase, this is next-school music.

FRANK OWEN

Is **GLENN DANZIG** Elvis's evil

Morrison? He's the most charismatic—and genuinely

Material chroniony prawem autorskim



twin reincarnated in the steroid-pumped body of Jim scary—rock'n'roll performer around. His band, DANZIG, embodies both rock's past glories and the promise of its future. Whether you like it or not. LEGS McNEIL reports. **Photographs by Anton Corbijn**

It looks just like the shopping mall from *Dawn of the Dead*—after it was rid of the zombies. The entire place is deserted. None of the shopkeepers are in their stores, but the happy fluorescent lighting and the ultra-pleasant Muzak is still humming along. Everything is on automatic pilot.

Suddenly, the silence is shattered.

"*Ahh*, man, there's gotta be a titty bar around here," complains Glenn Danzig to his road manager, George Harris, and his security chief Jesse James, as the three breeze through the mall's entrance.

"Empty! Just the way I like it—no assholes in my way," Glenn beams, throwing his shoulder-length black hair out of his face to reveal his striking looks. With his monstrously developed chest and his evil eyes, he looks like a cross between Jim Morrison and Cro-Magnon man. Only meaner.

"What do you want first, titty bars or comic books?" George asks.

"Comic books," Glenn answers.

"I already asked about the titty bars. They're down past the hotel," George says as he scans the Deerfield Shopping Mall directory in search of the comic book store. This evening's Danzig concert at the Palace Theater in Waukegan, Illinois, has been canceled. The hall owner got hold of the band's latest release, *Lucifuge*, and opened up the CD sleeve to see it formed an upside-down cross. To him, Danzig is an obvious sign of what Geraldo has warned everybody about: satanism, cult murders, and, of course, the theme music of eternal damnation.

"Yeah, it was the upside-down crosses and all that shit," says Danzig. "But here's the stupidity of it. The hall owner is supposed to be a good Christian, but if he knew anything about the upside-down cross, he'd know it was a very holy symbol. In fact, St. Peter was crucified upside down, because he said that it would be blasphemy to be crucified like his lord, Jesus Christ. . . ."

Danzig speaks in a bored tone that suggests he'd rather be concentrating on comics than theology.

"It was St. Peter or St. Paul, I forget which. . . ."

Glenn and Jesse and George don't give a fuck about the canceled show. They're just glad to have more time for serious comic shopping.

"You have any more Mighty Mouse Number Threes?" Glenn asks the fat, obnoxious store owner, while the other two comb the racks. There's a whole section of nothing but advanced Dungeons and Dragons guidebooks, as well as picture dictionaries of fantasy weapons and tactics for future wars. On the wall is a poster of Judge Dredd executing another cyberpunk perpetrator.

This isn't a comics shop as much as a convenience store of chaos for the postpunk, post-hardcore, post-everything kids who inhabit the wasteland, knowing that death and destruction are already upon us. These kids know there's nothing left to do but sit back and enjoy the fires burning out of control.

As lead singer of the Misfits, the seminal hardcore/thrash band of the early '80s—and later of the more experimental band Samhain—Glenn Danzig had always

Danzig with the Devil rock pagans on a roll.

employed his fantasies to create chaos for the world to enjoy. After 10 or 15 years of this, he's bored with explaining things. It's not what he likes to do. You either get what Danzig is doing, or you can fuck off. And it's that attitude that has them screaming in the aisles for more.

"But you're smart enough to realize," I persist, "that when you put out an upside-down cross it's going to piss a lot of people off?"

"If it pisses people off, that's their tough luck. I don't care about people with small minds."

He stops. The eyes grow darker, the bulging biceps tense up, the threat of violence radiates out of every pore.

"I don't like hassle in my life," he says, getting quieter, more intense. "Because I, ah, I have a really quick temper and it takes a lot of meditation to keep me from killing the world every day of my life."

The tension is broken as he compares his comic book loot with George and Jesse and cracks that devious smile.

Glenn Danzig is a new hero to America's post-apocalyptic youth—a comic book cover come to life, proving that they can endure and flourish in the wasteland.

When Glenn Danzig isn't being intense, ready to attack, he lets out that smile. That huge one—showing off all the teeth—that makes him look like the Big Bad Wolf caught holding the freshly devoured carcass of Grandma.

But just as fast, the smile is gone. Glenn suddenly looks up at the store owner and asks, "Hey, what about those Mighty Mouse Number Threes?"

Do you want to take a life? / Do you want to cross that line? / 'Cause it's a long way back from hell / And you don't want to go with me

—from "Long Way Back From Hell"

Onstage at the Barrymore Theater in Madison, Wisconsin, the following evening, it's easy to see why Danzig is the Next Big Thing. His Jim Morrison looks and vocal style—that same slurred, malevolent baritone, his monstrous physique radiating sexuality—combine with the tightest, most straight-ahead rock'n'roll band out there. Chuck Biscuits on drums is just above the huge skull with the piercing blue eyes. Eerie Von on bass and John Christ on lead, with their long black hair, pale skin, mustaches and beards, flank Glenn and hammer out the sound—a stirring, complete celebration of the Dark Side.

But it's not heavy metal. No boring guitar bullshit, indecipherable thrash, or high nasal screams. Just loud, evil rock'n'roll with a bluesy edge. And because of its simple, punishing fullness, the theater in Madison is packed with delinquents, punks, skins, and skateheads, as well as buxom blowjob blondes. All push to the edge of the stage and alternate between drooling at Glenn's feet and banging their heads on the stage floor.

This is definitely not an R.E.M. college crowd. The college kids will come around in a year or two, but right now Danzig is only for those who can appreciate this Frank Frazetta cover come to life. You remember those wonderfully violent Conan covers where the Barbarian is slicing the Intruder's head off with the giant sword while the big-breasted sorceress stands behind him, warding off huge saber-toothed tigers? To these post-apocalyptic kids, Glenn Danzig is a new hero, their authentic champion of evil—a comic book cover come to life, proving that they can endure and flourish in the wasteland.

I'm the wolf / I'm the one you want / I'm the killer wolf / I'm 'onna pound you home

—from "Killer Wolf"

No, this isn't about satanism or a struggle between church and state. Nor is it about censorship. This goes way beyond that. What Danzig is about is drawing the line between those who believe in the facade of the American Dream and those who want to fuck all night, howl at the moon, and lay it all to waste, celebrating the survival of the Greatest American Nightmare—the New Rulers of the Malls surveying their domain, announcing that they now own the wasteland, and scaring the hell out of the rest of the population.

Somewhere between Madison, Wisconsin, and Columbus, Ohio, Danzig pulls me to the back of the tour bus. "You know if you're gonna fantasize," he says, "go all the way. That's my problem with people: They fantasize half way. I always believed fantasy was, How far can your mind go? Don't settle for nothin' when you can have everything. That's how my life is. Why set your sights on ten when you can set your sights on a million, a billion, a trillion?"

"Is that the difference between Danzig and the Misfits," I ask, "that it's more Glenn Danzig's personal fantasy?"

Glenn tenses. He hates to answer questions about the Misfits. They remain *the* mythic hardcore band—a nice moment in time that influenced a lot of people—but they're not the thing he wants to be remembered for.

"The funny thing is that the Misfits weren't really popular when they were around," he explains. "Also, they weren't very good live. I was good, as good as you can be at eighty-million miles an hour.

"I don't think a lot of people got what I was doing in the Misfits. The guys in the band didn't even get it. They still don't get it. I hate those guys. I can't stand them. The Misfits didn't break up on good terms. I cut myself loose because it was a dead end. They couldn't play to begin with. They didn't care about the fans, and they didn't want to be professional. They were holding me back. So I joined up with Eerie, and we did Samhain. Eerie and I used to hang out together when I was in the Misfits, because the guys in the band didn't like to do anything. They were rich snobs. They only liked doing drugs.

"But after I started Samhain with Eerie, the other guys in the band left and we had to start all over. It would have been easy just to be Samhain, but I thought it was better just to start from the beginning with Chuck Biscuits and John Christ and just have our own identity.

"Rick Rubin [Def Jam cofounder and now head of Danzig's label, Def American] came to see us at the New Music Seminar in '86 and he came running backstage and said, 'You guys are great! The best band I've ever seen, blah, blah, blah. . . .' He gives me his card, and I think he's a freak. I didn't know who the fuck he was. But he seemed sincere.

"So I went down to his offices, right off Houston [Street] in New York City, and I hear this loud music blaring. And it isn't even a fucking record company office, but a fucking loft apartment. Records all over the place, phones ringing, people calling. Rick screaming, 'What? What? What? Fuck you,' and sticking the phone into the speaker and then hanging up.

Glenn cracks the smile again when he thinks of Rick

continued on page 83

STUS
NO GROOVE

In an effort to trace the history of her conversion to new-age '90s-style positivity, Lady Miss Kier, post-gorgeous singer with post-fabulous dance-music outfit Deee-Lite, is talking about how punk nihilism and postpunk miserable-ism became just another excuse not to give a fuck. "The punk attitude was like, voting doesn't matter because we're still controlled, fuck everything," says Kier. "And that was beautiful for the time, but once it reached the mass media it was just another trend. It was trendy not to pass along information about how you could change things. It was trendy to be selfish. It was trendy to be apathetic. It was trendy to take heroin, the most apathetic drug there is.

"In the early '80s, if you said, 'Hey, I'm gonna go celebrate Earth Day in Central Park,' people were so cynical they would be like, 'Why?' But things started to change about the time of the harmonic convergence."

This writer distinctly remembers a night spent at the legendary New York dance club Paradise Garage during the time of the harmonic convergence (August 16 and 17, 1987). The dance floor cleared early that weekend (i.e., 5 or 6 A.M., rather than 10 or 11 A.M.), and people trekked en masse from SoHo up to Central Park to celebrate what some really thought was the dawning of the Age of Aquarius. In my cynical fashion at the time, I wondered what use a house-music audience (composed mostly of working-class gay African-Americans) had for marginal white-bread new-age gobbledygook. That was before I realized house music is, first and foremost, a spiritual underground, rather than a musical underground.

Earlier this year, in these pages, Steven Daly wondered whether all this talk of the new-age '90s and the new positivity on the dance floor might be just a new decade's version of "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

"Deee-Lite doesn't say, 'Don't worry, be happy,' " says Super DJ Dmitry. "There's a lot to worry about. But worrying by itself is not going to do anything. Unity is gonna change things. Global consciousness is gonna change things."

"We acknowledge the negative things," says Kier, "but we don't have time to dwell on them."

"I acknowledge the rightness and goodness of Public Enemy," says Dmitry, "but at the same time we prefer the Jungle Brothers, De la Soul, and A Tribe Called Quest" (whose lead rapper, Q-Tip, raps on Deee-Lite's debut single, "Groove Is in the Heart").

It's that something in the air—that distinct sense of positivity and possibility. That feeling that the technology of sampling is about to give birth to a new psychedelia. This link becomes clearer if you think of '60s psychedelia—not as the hippy-dippy wig-out it was portrayed as in the mainstream media, but as a movement devoted to the mutations of the latest technologies toward quasi-religious ends.

Deee-Lite (two DJs, Towa Towa and Dmitry, and a singer, Lady Miss Kier), like other house bands, uses sampling because house music is the most-evolved pop example of the hallucinatory effects of modern technology.

Despite the fact that in Lady Kier house music has its first truly videogenic leading lady, Deee-Lite insists that the central figure of house music is still the DJ—he who speaks by remaining silent, simply choosing the right rhythm for the right moment and the right sonic texture for the right emotion. He who is more akin to a guru than a mere spinner of other people's records.

"DJs are the ones responsible for making things psychedelic again," says Kier. "DJs are the ones creating uplifting experiences, joining minds on the dance floor. Like the fact someone will come up and request a song to the DJ that is already in his hand; he's just about to mix it in and someone asks for the same song."

"When I DJ, that happens to me at least once a night," interjects Dmitry.

"There's gotta be something said for that kind of synchronicity," says Kier. "That ability to tap in. That's what our song 'E.S.P.' is about—the DJ tapping into what you're feeling."

"It's nice to be on the pop charts, but it means more to us that DJs such as Tony Humphries, Junior and Richard Vasquez, Bobby Condors, Frankie Knuckles, David Morales, and David Depino like our music. That's real success."

In a time when new technology is making national boundaries increasingly porous, Deee-Lite goes with the flow, talking about "communication on the brink" about to give birth to an age of "global consciousness." The group sees house music as the inevitable soundtrack to this process because it's the nearest thing to a pop-music Esperanto we have. It also sees the age of mass media being superseded by "the age of communication"—the mass-media *demassifying* due to the advent of easily available, increasingly in-

DEEE-LITE is on the psychedelic tip, on the one-world tip, and on the conscious tip. But most of all, the group's on the making-house-music-intelligible-to-the-masses tip. **Photographs by Jesse Frohman**

expensive samplers, fax machines, satellite TVs, interactive biotech computers, etc.

And who are the agents of this profound historical change? Who are the ones who had the intelligence and dexterity to inaugurate this era of musical possibility?

Dmitry clues us in: "I think it's hilarious that the people who embraced the technology first weren't the college-age rock oriented kids that had the money to buy computers and had the education to know how to use them. It wasn't those kids at all. It was the dance community, which is mainly an inner-city urban community—a street community."

"The schools they went to probably didn't even have computers," says Kier. "Yet these are the kids who embrace the technology and started this musical revolution."

When your SPIN reporter offers the contentious suggestion that perhaps Kraftwerk has been as major an influence as James Brown has been on contemporary house and hip hop, Deee-Lite wholeheartedly agrees. Definitely. No doubt about it.

As easy to dismiss as Marshall McLuhan set to a house beat, but better to dance to than Jean Baudrillard set to an industrial beat.

Because the genre is more important than the individual artist, because the song is more important than the singer, because most of the founding figures of this music are gay African-Americans, and because the groove is in the heart, major record companies have displayed a remarkable indifference in this country to, along with hip hop, the only new music to come out in the '80s. Deee-Lite is in the process of changing that.

It's said that they are doing for house music what De la Soul before them did for hip hop. A more accurate comparison is to Run-D.M.C. Just as Run-D.M.C. reinvented hip hop as an album medium as much as a singles medium, so Deee-Lite—with its astonishing debut album, *World Clique*—is doing the same thing, making the music intelligible to the masses with

Despite the fact that in Lady Kier house music has its first truly video-genic leading lady, Deee-Lite insists that the central figure of house music is still the DJ, who is more akin to a guru than a mere spinner of other people's records.

"Like, a hillbilly can have a satellite with a TV and can have more information about people from other parts of the world coming in than someone in the heart of New York City. You can't stop the flow of information."

And you can't stop the flow of this band to all corners of this vast crazy planet.

Deee-Lite has this evil double known as Deee-Good—also two DJs and a single singer and also signed to a major entertainment conglomerate. But unlike Deee-Lite, who on the day I interviewed them had no idea where their debut single, "Groove Is in the Heart," was on the *Billboard* charts, Deee-Good always knows its position on the charts—even the number of units being sold in any area of the country at any particular time.

Deee-Good is a worst-case scenario—Deee-Lite's originality diluted by a wave of corny imitators as was the case with Soul II Soul. The major companies see the success and influence of Deee-Lite and sign anything with platform shoes and a turntable to their newly renovated dance-music departments. Major music bigwigs will talk about how disco never really sucked and will make disastrous attempts to cut a figure on the dance floor.

But that's the worst of all possible futures. For the moment, I'm still dancing to Deee-Lite.

out misrepresenting its essence; turning what once was a minor language into a major language.

Deee-Lite thinks one of the reasons house music hasn't got the respect it deserves in the American music industry is the confusion of the terms house and disco.

"Because of the fast tempo of house music," says Kier, "a lot of people think house is disco. But the whole persona of disco was escapist, which house isn't. Disco started out as this beautiful, black, gay-liberation thing in the early '70s, but by the late '70s it was, 'I wanna do cocaine, I wanna wear designer clothes, I wanna live forever.' House music isn't like that. It's spiritual."

In an issue devoted to the future of new music, why champion Deee-Lite—a band pegged as retro-'70s revivalists because of its platform shoes?

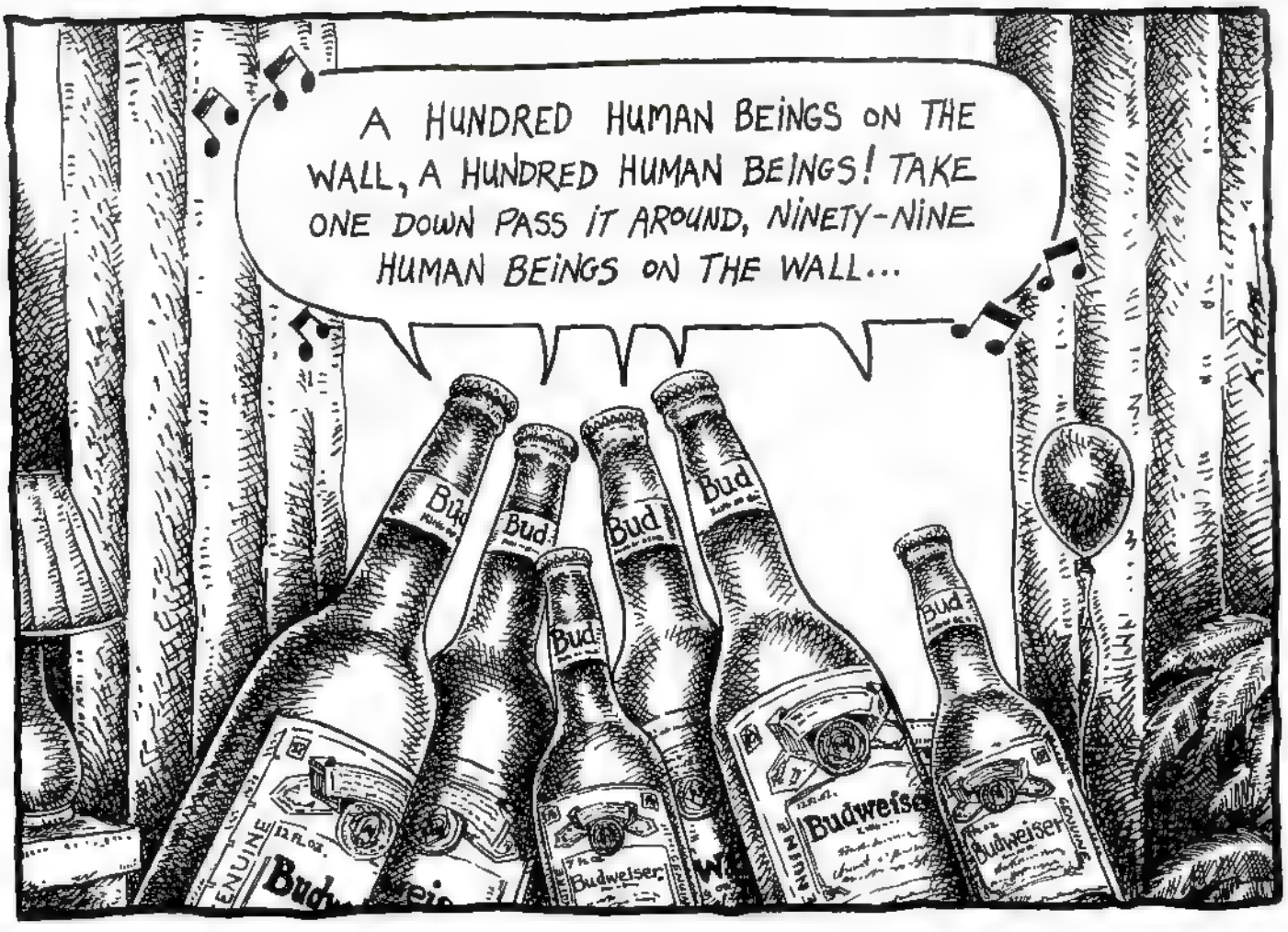
"You can't judge a book by its cover," says Kier. "We would classify our style as individuality while retaining social awareness. But other people see a '70s fashion revival. People jump to a lot of conclusions based on the way we look, but the music speaks for itself.

"We may gravitate toward such influences from the past that people recognize, such as Sly and the Family Stone and Parliament-Funkadelic, but we also gravitate toward ideas that are completely from the future. But people don't recognize the future, because they've never seen it. So when they hear Deee-Lite, they compare us to something from the past, rather than hearing it for what it is—something new."

"Global consciousness is a new thing because it hasn't happened yet," says Dmitry, laughing. "So people who say Deee-Lite are retro can kiss their own ass if they can reach."

Their emphasis on the global is a necessary corrective to those who see house music as a purely local and urban phenomenon. People are listening to Deee-Lite on college campuses and in suburban shopping malls, as well as in nightclubs and on street corners. Just as hip hop inevitably became a suburban phenomenon, so will house music.

"That's because we're in the age of communication," chirps up Miss Kier.


A HUNDRED HUMAN BEINGS ON THE WALL, A HUNDRED HUMAN BEINGS! TAKE ONE DOWN PASS IT AROUND, NINETY-NINE HUMAN BEINGS ON THE WALL...
Bud
Budweiser
ENUINE

As the party wound down, the 7oz longneck led the others in a spirited rendition of an old end-of-night favorite.

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT IS NOTHING BEATS A BUD.

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ALICE IN CHAINS may credit Seattle as the breeding ground for the doom and depression of its lyrics, but the band would probably feel the same in any other city.

The first time the labels came to Seattle to check out Alice in Chains, singer Layne Staley got himself a mohawk for the gig. "It was huge," he says. "I used up a whole can of hair spray. I'm going, 'It's gotta be taller. It's gotta be taller.' "

"We were all on coke, high as hell," adds guitarist Jerry Cantrell. "So Layne comes out with this fuckin' mohawk, this punk jacket. And the first line in one of our songs is, 'You say you don't like the way we look. fuck off!' So Layne does it, and the [label people] said, 'All right,' and walked out."

It hasn't been that long since Layne's coiffure disaster, but the band's clearly being groomed as Columbia Records' next big thing—a candidate for the magic combo of critical respect and record sales à la Faith No More and Living Colour.

There's currently a bidding war for the band's merchandising rights; the label is giving the guys a nice bus for their very first tour; and their contract was negotiated by entertainment-law bigwig Peter Paterno. As they sit happily munching on a lobster dinner, courtesy of their publicity department, Layne mentions which two of his idols he wants to meet: Slayer and Prince.

Talk to these seemingly happy, upwardly mobile guys for a while, and the subject will inevitably turn to death and depression. It's the sincerity of this gloomy edge that makes their *Facelift* disc so memorable. "We'd be pretty fucking boring if we were like that all the time," says Jerry. "But we take our music very seriously. We go through problems and hassles and feelings—fuckin' shit. You feel alone, you run through a lot of emotions."

Besides, they live in Seattle. "It's constantly gray, and it rains almost all the time," says Layne, "so you can't spend all your time on the beach drinking beer. You have to do things like practicing and writing songs. But I'm sure I'd be equally depressed in L.A. or New York," he adds. "Just about different things. It's great for our music."

The song "Killing Yourself," off their first EP, is about bad habits that can kill. Alice in Chains cleaned up its act a while back. Jerry says the band members can barely remember their first year as a band. When their close

ROCKY SCHENCK

friend Andrew Wood of the band Mother Love Bone died of an overdose this year, "it blew us away," says Layne "We had to get out of town. It was really hard to stay in Seattle and listen to groupies and fans, trying to glom on to that whole story and be a part of it." At the time they were in the middle of recording their album so they picked it all up and moved to Los Angeles.

While in L.A., Jerry wrote "Sunshine" about his mother's death. "When I was a little kid," he says, "I'd always tell her, 'I'll be famous and buy you a house, and you'll never have to work again. I'll take care of you like you took care of me.' When she passed away, it was a really shitty time for me; I didn't know how to deal with it then, and I still don't. But it gave me the impetus to do what I'm doing."

Drummer Sean Kinney's dad, who is a cop, has also been instrumental in the band's career. "He's not a jerk-off cop," says Sean. "He's a really cool guy." At one gig, Layne had to stay outside until it was time to play (at the time, he was only 20). "I couldn't drink, or anything," he says. "All our families were there—so Sean's dad goes and takes his badge out and says, 'I'm a cop and he's with me.' " Layne got in and proceeded to get bombed out of his mind.

Most of the members of Alice in Chains grew up listening to commercial metal and glam bands. "When we were kids, Ratt and Mötley Crüe were happening," says Jerry. Now their priorities have changed. But they want to make it clear they're not an intellectual, preachy band, either.

"I'd like our music to hit someone on a gut level," he says. "Take it and be moved by it—I'd like them to feel something, whether they love it or fucking hate it. We're all outcasts. We just want to be able to look each other in the eye and go, This is pretty cool. That's all you need: everybody grooving on the same thing."

"No you don't," says Sean. "You need a Harley and cowboy boots and leather pants and a fringe jacket, and maybe a tan."

"And more tattoos than anyone else," adds bassist Mike Starr. His girlfriend bought him $500 snakeskin boots, but he never wears them. He says, "I'll wait till they go out of style."

DAINA DARZIN

CHRIS CLUNN

MONIE LOVE turns a phrase and catches a beat.

School's in. Listen up as Monie Love explains what it takes to be a good rapper: "You need a good perception of the English language, good diction, good pronunciation. And a good knowledge of vocabulary is important, too, otherwise you run out of words to say and end up using the same words in every song. Some people get lazy—the same people who never used to pay attention in English class."

The 20-year-old English hip hop doll intends to expand her musical vocab, too; when she sat behind the drums for the Jungle Brothers' "Doin' Our Own Dang" clip, she wasn't just goofing off. Love is a lapsed drummer who may well incorporate her instrumental prowess on her next record.

Incongruously enough, Bangles' stick person Vicki Peterson is named as a drum idol second only to Paisley Park skin pounder Sheila E., who, gushes the Mo, "gets real funky, and she's crazily innovative!"

Drums are just part of Love's plans for the future; she would also like to see a lot more live instrumentation. And on her new album there is a nifty reworking of the Detroit Spinners' "It's a Shame." Isn't there a danger that this could lead to hip hop being diluted? "I'll always have rap roots regardless of what I do, 'cause that's *my* roots," she insists. "A lot of people are opening up to versatility these days — Kane, Latifah, Ice-T: they're all doing it, using more music and stuff."

This open-minded philosophy has certainly served the youngster well, since "It's a Shame" has just become Love's first Top Ten hit in Britain. Peer-group respect has long been hers in the U.S. and, judging by a recent shopping trip to Brooklyn, that elusive commercial breakthrough may not be far behind.

"I got held hostage at a supermarket down on Pitkin Avenue by a bunch of little kids," she marvels. "I couldn't believe it. About 30 or 40 of them surrounded the store and I had to escape through the back door."

A happier trip to the borough resulted in Spike Lee offering her a small role in his upcoming movie, *Jungle Fever*, a project which as it turned out conflicted with Love's recording commitments. Though tempted, she has so far stuck with her musical career—proof that Monie Love is in it to win it.

STEVEN DALY

MICHAEL LLEWELLYN

The THRASH-FUNK scene proudly presents PRIMUS, along with a host of others. Go for the funk, don't get your dreds stomped in the metal mosh pit.

Thrash is on its way out. Red Hot Chili Peppers and Living Colour are makin' money. So what's a hip white boy to do? Lose those Slayer T-shirts, dig out the old Parliament records, and slap that bass. All of a sudden there's a virtual army of funk-metal bands, primarily centered in the San Francisco Bay Area. They range from thrashers, who lend an occasional funk edge to some of their material (Mordred and Death Angel), to straight-out funkers (Primus, Psychefunkapus, and Limbomaniacs) to those who defy categorization (Faith No More).

At its best, thrash funk is a genuinely new sound: funky bottom and wailing, reverby guitars, funk's house-party vibes with metal's nasty edge. At its worst, it's just another case of white people ripping off black culture (a rock'n'roll tradition since Elvis).

"That's a simplistic way of looking at it," retorts Limbomaniacs front man Butthouse. "It seems very superficial to seal people off and say, 'Look, you were born this color, and this is what you have to play.' "

"Funk and blues and rock have been around forever," says Mind Funk guitarist Louis Svitek. "It's just that now they're coming together as one." But Primus singer and bassist Les Claypool admits, "That pretty much could be, but rock'n'roll has always stemmed from black culture. This is just another phase."

To monitor the temperature of any music scene, one only has to look toward the record company A&R execs who start baying at club and rehearsal space doors when they hear that a "hot new sound" is about to explode. Primus is getting a strong dose of that right now, although the band is starting to outgrow the constraints that the thrash funk sound, which has sprung full-grown from the belly of San Francisco, has put on them. Besides being damn fine musicians, Les, guitarist Larry LaLonde, and drummer Tim "Herb" Alexander play in Technicolor. Primus's lyrics traverse the terrain of pudding, squirrels, and toys, while Les's onstage persona has been compared with a litany of cartoon characters.

When Primus packed San Francisco's War Memorial Auditorium recently, there was a healthy mix of fadeheads and skinheads rounding out the mosh pit. The kids sang and slammed and showed their love for the band in a unique way: They shouted, "You suck!"

"At the beginning," explains Les. "We'd be onstage and say, 'We suck,' and then the audience would yell it back, and it stuck."

"Yeah," adds Larry, "you'd be walking down the street with friends who didn't know that, and someone would point and say, 'You suck,' and the friend would go, 'Did you hear what that guy said?' like, surprised."

"The kids are our hometown homies," says Les. "All-age crowds are where the audience is. At 21-and-over clubs people just stand there, but kids, they freak out, jump all over the place, and stage dive. That's the cool part."

Primus emerged from a thrash background, but abandoned it five years ago for a "King Crimson, Talking Heads, obscure college-radio type thing," according to Les. "Our drummer's into Eastern music and our guitar player's a Deadhead, so we have a lot of different influences. Between the three of us we're able to come up with some weird shit."

Since media acceptance for most things new takes a while to get off the ground, many of these bands were faced with the prospect of putting out their albums independently in order to garner themselves some attention. Primus put out *Suck on This* in 1989 (it was recently rereleased by Caroline Records). "The whole idea was to put the first one out on our own," explains Les, "then take the money from that and record *Frizzle Fry*. We figured then we would have enough clout to deal with major labels and keep our artistic control."

The band's combo of groove and grunge has brought it attention at a time when a growing number of bands sound like a marriage between George Clinton and Metallica. "People have a tendency to want to put things in one category," says Les. "We always try to stay out of that. With record companies they go, What do we do with these guys? How are we gonna market it? The production of *Frizzle Fry* doesn't sound like whatever the mainstream sound is."

Primus's first video from the album, "John the Fisherman," is in regular rotation on MTV. The band would love to do a video for every song on the album and Les adds with a laugh "In the next one we want to drop a piece of cherry pie in Barbara Bush's lap."

But record companies are quickly realizing there is a huge market for the thrash-funk sound and the majors are falling all over themselves to get a piece of it. Mind Funk has yet to emerge from its New Jersey practice space, yet the band's already signed to Epic. Composed of ex-members of thrashers M.O.D. and Celtic Frost, and hardcore band Uniform Choice, Mind Funk welds metal's wall of sound guitar firepower and funk's rhythms.

Ironically, the guys in Mind Funk don't really consider themselves funk metal musicians. "Everyone's jumping on that bandwagon," says vocalist Pat Dubar. "We may have funky parts in our songs, but as far as playing straight funk, forget it. We couldn't do it as well as the guys who originated it. We take a lot of different elements from rap to the Doors and jazz and mix them together."

Another Bay Area outfit, Limbomaniacs, emerged from jazz fusion through two of the region's previous hip sounds—ska and world beat. Their music is the most rap-oriented among that of the current batch of funksters. Thrashers come to their regular shows, but once they were mistakenly hired as a Caribbean band, played Latin and reggae covers and insist they went over great.

America isn't the only place to put this musical hybrid on the map. The Electric Boys are from Sweden and signed to Atco Records. They came by their funk rock sound through a process of elimination, running through blues, pop, roots rock, and hard rock. "In the beginning, it sounded really corny 'cause we didn't know what to do," says front man Conny Bloom. He thinks the funk-metal thing is happening because "hard rock is, well, boring."

So is hardcore thrash, says ex-Cro Mags vocalist John Joseph, now with the brand new band Both Worlds. "So many bands came out that sounded the same," he says, "it kind of burned itself out. Funk is fun music to play, and it's good to see girls having a good time up front, not just dudes with spikes on their arms."

DAINA DARZIN AND LAUREN SPENCER

Peering into the future: Primus members, *from left*, Larry LaLonde, Les Claypool, and Tim "Herb" Alexander are baiting their musical hook with thrash-funk sounds fresh from the San Francisco Bay Area.

While tooling down the back roads of Jesse Helms's North Carolina, up goes the cry "Buck wildin'!" as the Terminator X tune of the same name slides into the dash. It replaces the ethereal strains of "Carolyn's Fingers" by the Cocteau Twins.

Meet the Veldt, an inspired prospect in a season of bizarre musical hybrids. This band's thing, you see, is to combine the sensibility of its favorite guitar bands with the hip hop beats that constitute the soundtrack of its members' lives; thus, samples of the Throwing Muses fuse with Eric B. beats to form an effect that's both natural and startlingly unfamiliar.

This unique cross-cultural literacy is best explained by the fact that, though brought up in a black household in Chapel Hill, the band's formidable songwriting partnership grew up with alternative rock, specifically WKNC, the student-operated radio station of North Carolina State University.

Daniel and Danny Chavis, 24-year-old twins, played in separate bands until 1987 when, united by their love of all things British, they resolved to form the Veldt. To complete the aggregate they roped in drummer and rap addict Marvin Levi, who in turn brought in reggae-inspired bass player Joe Boyle to provide the ballast.

Despite the burgeoning music scene in the twins' hometown and nearby Georgia, the nascent combo has never felt an affinity with its authentic-rockin' neighbors. "We're not into that Southern rock sound like Mitch Easter and R.E.M.," declares Levi bluntly. "That's all very good for picking cotton, but those days are over."

Taking inspiration wherever the band could find it, the Veldt would occasionally stumble across new sections of its stylistic jigsaw. "When I first heard This Mortal Coil's cut 'Song to the Siren,'" says Daniel, as he gets ready to bum-rush yet another frat party, "I thought, This is *exactly* what we have to do – combine a soulful voice with that music, then add the hip hop beats.'

However improbable that mix sounds, the possibilities had always been there. "The drums on the Cocteau Twins are *in the house*," Marvin Levi explains, "but people don't realize that because they're too busy stereotyping." The Cocteaus themselves were rather nonplussed by Daniel's pledge of admiration when the two groups met. "Y'all sho' nuff do be kickin'," he beamed to their total bemusement.

Once over the initial culture shock, Coc's majordomo, Robin Guthrie, took the Veldt under his ample wing, producing what was to be the band's debut album for Capitol Records. Disaster struck, however, when a change of staff at the label left the band with a new A&R man who, to put it mildly, didn't know what time it was. This blow-dried Bozo couldn't find a place for the band on his roster, so the Veldt retired to Chapel Hill to consider its next move.

A setback of this magnitude might have stopped lesser outfits in their tracks, but the Veldt emerged with a hard-won solidarity and a healthy suspicion of outsiders. "It's a dog eat dog business," notes Levi, "and we got rabies—but we've shaken it off."

That grim sojourn may yet prove fruitful, because the return to roadwork has seen the Veldt toughen up its act considerably, giving the band time to fully emerge from the shadow of its mentors. The improvement was certainly evident at a recent show in Athens, Georgia, where the band turned in a set of astonishing power and dynamic range. During a coruscating version of the ballad "Heather," Daniel got the band to take it right down while he crooned a line from Teddy Pendergrass's slow-love classic, "Turn Out the Lights"—a bit of stagecraft learned from seeing Ian McCulloch live while the band was recording in London.

The U.K. trip also offered a close-up confirmation of the Veldt's Anglophilia, leaving a keen awareness that the current relaxing of musical definitions can do the group's cause nothing but good. In its own land, however, the band's launch is fraught with the knowledge that men of color who bear guitars tend to be pigeonholed with their contemporaries, however inappropriately. (It would be doing the Veldt a disservice to name names here, but suffice it to say that none of *this* band's songs are in 13/6 time.)

Daniel is an unabashed isolationist regarding the issue of black rock bands. "I don't mean to dis any of them," he says, "just to distance ourselves in terms of association by color. If any bands in the United States have a hard time, it would be us—the black bands who are not playing R&B, what they expect us to play. So we all share a common bond, common goal, common oppressor."

So how, exactly, would this intriguing band define itself?

Daniel, the band's cherubic vocalist, hastily reworks Bell Biv's infamous catch phrase: "Hip hop spiced up on the punk-soul tip with a Brit appeal. That's it, that's the one!" he says with a grin.

STEVEN DALY

JAYNE WEXLER

THE VELDT—stop what you're doin', 'cause they're about to ruin the image and the sound of what you're used to.

PRIMAL SCREAM has left behind rock'n'roll alienation for the ecstasy of dance-floor communion.

Primal Scream is riding the crest of the contemporary. The band's bag (the fusion of 1967 retro-pop with state-of-the-art dance rhythms) has been, so far, the quintessential sound of young Britain in the '90s. Now that Primal Scream's label, Creation, has signed the band to Sire/Warner Bros., it'll be fascinating to see whether Primal Scream's incongruous welding of rhapsodic '60s melodies to a '90s techno-funk undercarriage will make as much sense in the U.S.A. as it does in the U.K.

These days, Primal Scream's singer and spokesman Bobby Gillespie enthuses about the psychedelic potential of the sampler ("It's given us a whole new palette of colors") and argues for miscegenation between black and white pop ("All the great white rock of the past has been influenced by black music"). Only a few years ago, Primal Scream was the supreme incarnation of indie purism and techno-fear. The band's music was a living archive of classic rock'n'roll's gestures.

So what caused this metamorphosis from leather-trousered rockers to clubland gurus? During 1989, Gillespie, Creation supremo Alan McGhee, and other Creation artists started going to acid-house parties. "Contemporary rock had ceased to excite us," says Gillespie. "At raves, the music, the girls, and the drugs were better. Gradually, house music began to seep into our unconscious."

The result was "Loaded," a cross between "Sympathy for the Devil" and Soul II Soul. "Loaded" provided Primal Scream with its first hit. For the second hit, "Come Together," the band gave producer Andy Weatherall carte blanche to turn its original rock song into a state-of-art techno-devotional complete with new age synths, gospel choirs, and samples of Jesse Jackson heralding "a new day."

"Come Together" was Gillespie severing his ties with the rock outsider tradition. He's no longer obsessed with the frigid glamour of alienation. "I'm through being cool. Ecstasy and the rave scene got rid of everybody's inhibitions. Strangers started communicating. Rock used to be a medium for people to talk to each other. But it's not anymore, and that's sad. The future lies with dance-floor culture."

SIMON REYNOLDS

The SOUP DRAGONS have tried on many musical coats— they've finally found one that fits.

A couple of years ago, the Soup Dragons seemed to be a bunch of pretentious art-poser rip-offs. The cover of the Scottish band's 1987 debut, *Hang-Ten!*, portrays them as preppie schoolboys sporting a subtle smart-ass aesthetic arrogance. (One of them is actually holding three wooden plaques with letters that spell *art*.) The music was fun, but straight up the Buzzcocks' speed-guitar fuzz alley.

The follow-ups, *This Is Our Art* (yeah, right) and *Crotch Deep Trash*, were definitely not more of the same. The songs drew influence from the entire pop spectrum—from heavy grunge to '60s*ish*-layered psychedelia. But though they were more interesting, it still wasn't clear what kind of band the Soup Dragons wanted to be.

Yet with this year's *Lovegod*, the Soup Dragons hit their stride. The major catalyst for the record's success is the smooth dance remake of the Rolling Stones' "I'm Free," featuring a reggae guest vocal by Junior Reid, formerly of Black Uhuru. But it's not a fluke hit. The other tracks stack up to it as well-crafted danceable rock with immaculate production—samples and effects craftily woven into the guitar-based mix.

Lovegod is diverse without roaming. At last it's apparent why the Soup Dragons never sounded like any particular type of band. They never wanted to. Their desire is to make good music—to create interesting art—and they finally know how to do it.

"We've just gotten more experimental," lead singer Sean Dickson explains of the band's development. "Early on we'd just bang the songs out, but we refuse to do that now. It's not the 1990s way of recording. When you start fucking about with songs, it's really exciting. The whole concept of the Soup Dragons comes from a pop art background that's defined by bastardizing things. That's where the whole idea of sampling comes from."

The Soup Dragons' pop art roots allow them to handle the entire creative process—record art, videos, ads, etc.—through their own company called Soup Art.

"We're taking full control," declares Sean. "Everything that defines the Soup Dragons is very important."

MARK BLACKWELL

It's one of the smoothest moments in recorded hip hop, and you've probably never heard it. The record received little or no publicity, promotion, or airplay. Released late last year by a conglomeration called Hip Hop Against Apartheid, it's called *Ndodemnyama (Free South Africa).* It contains excellent performances by the likes of Afrika Bambaataa (who coproduced it with Jazzy Jay), Jungle Brothers, X-Clan, Lakim Shabazz, the xylophonic Queen Latifah, and a band with a jam that, up to that point, was receiving more attention from its fans than from the group's record company. "Feels So Good" is the jam. The flip side is called "Brand Nubian." So is the band: vocalists Grand Puba Maxwell, Derek X, Lord Jammar, and DJ Alamo.

Anyway, *Ndodemnyama* is rockin' along South Afrika's gotta stop. Come his solo, Lord Jammar does this: "Now here's what I think we should do / Rise up—"

He rolls the next phrase like a fat-ass joint to form the rhyme: "—and start a revolu-"

A slight pause. Then he drops the syllable in your lap: "—shun."

It almost works on paper. In your ear, the stuff hits you like the Funk of Ages. Like, Lord Jammar has just made the modus operandi of hip hop quite literal, obvious, and apparent—simply and swiftly. "I don't give a fuck about the English language," he says. "It ain't mine, it's stiff as a piece of frozen shit; it's mostly used to fuck with me, and I'm gonna do anything I can do to cold-wreck the shit."

"When you build, you destroy at the same time," says Jammar, 22. "As I gain knowledge I destroy negativity within my cipher." There's benevolence in such violence, since the Afrikan, in his or her process of making the white imagined/messed-up world more humane, breathes life into stale, white forms and sets the record straight on who's original; who really created all this, who really breast-fed and burped civilization. That is to say, What would the state of white speech, poetry, music, and art be if, instead of starting this thing called hip hop back in 1974, we had just shut up and got mad at y'all? Hmm?

Though Puba is definitely lead vocalist, perhaps Derek X, second in the rhyme lineup and, thusly, the literal center of the crew, best typifies the Brand Nubian style: civil, laid back, jazzy grooves under crazy-rough, fussy vocal edges. On his solo cut, "Concerto in X Minor," from the Nubian album *One for All*, the Hunter College biz major rhymes about racism rambunctiously, like a madman scribbling a death threat. Or a love letter. I can't transcribe this one – you gotta hear the lyrics.

Brand Nubian jumped out of the ashes of Masters of Ceremony, a crew containing Grand Puba, his cousin Dr. Who, and its DJ, Shabazz. In Masters, Grand Puba's slightly nasal, slightly whiny tenor, and his tendency to bump off the ends of his sentences contributed to some interesting, asymmetrical—mostly unheard—hip hop. Local hits included "Cracked Out" and "Sexy." Before that there was a little-remembered record ("Crime") on a little-remembered label (M-Low Records), made with a little-remembered coproducer (Teddy Riley).

After differences between the members of Masters, Puba pulled together Derek X and Lord Jammar, two bruvvahs he was producing as soloists. Derek X was then interning at a Harlem health clinic, and Lord Jammar, who in the early days of hip hop was leader of K.D. and the Ever-Loving 3 MCs, was working odd jobs. (An admission that Jammar's K.D. stood for Kid Disco brings bales of laughter from the group.) Alamo, who also worked at the health clinic, rounded off the rhythm section.

The Nubians don't like the hit TV show *In Living Color* at all, they don't like the band Living Colour (or more particularly, heavy metal), and, as you would imagine from a crew that threatens to "drop the bomb on the yacub . . . caveman crew," white rappers hardly rate on the Nubian Scale either. The name of a particular white vocalist enjoying some fame of late provokes this 16th-century example from Jammar: "John Hardy Hawkins [a British slave trader]. He studied Islam for, like, three years. So when he went to Afrika, he said, 'A salaam alaikum.' They took him as a friend."

"Just like they do with everyone," adds Puba. "Just like Serch [3rd Bass's rapper]."

"He was cool," says Jammar. "He was a cool white boy. And he came over there, just like Serch says, 'How ya livin', hawwpa?' and we think, Ah yeah, that's all right. At first we don't like 'im, but then, he talk our language, he submits to us, and we say it's all right. Then they start *takin'* shit."

Yup. No shorts for Brand Nubian. With the group's new single, "Wake Up," leading the way, the future for the Funk should be shiny. It'd better be. Leader Puba pauses only a second when asked what he'd be doing if he weren't doing this.

"I wouldn't exist."

HARRY ALLEN

BRAND NUBIAN is a group of hip hop activists, the future of the Funk, and a member of the Nation of Five Percent.

KLAUS LAUBMAYER

Urge Overkill ▶

I'm not the man from outer space
I'm just a boy without a place / It doesn't bother me

from "Faroutski"

Urge Overkill may be the future of American rock "Faroutski," indeed

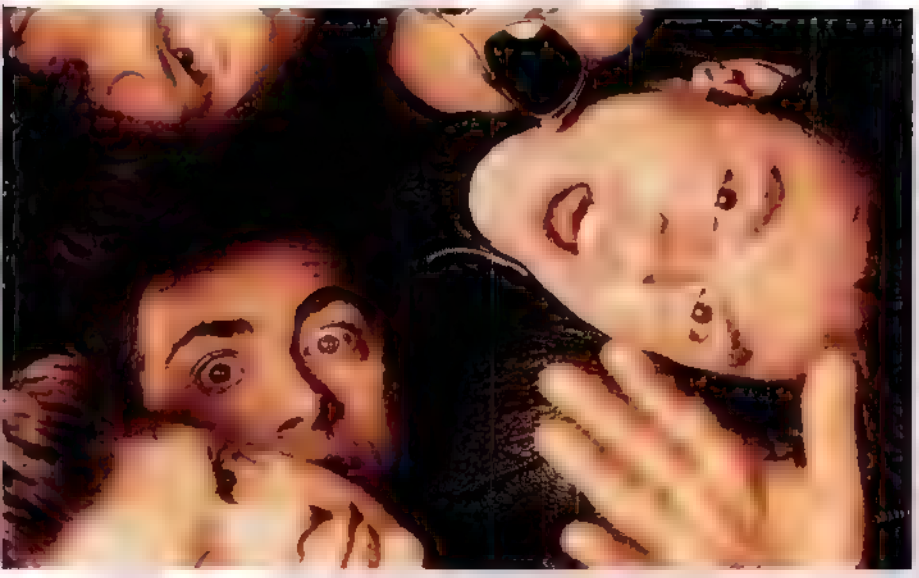
The band calls its music *cyberpop*—which is more clever than descriptive—and the guys say they've been listening to a lot of Neil Diamond recently. The new Urge Overkill record is going to be extremely song-oriented. The last Urge Overkill record *Americruiser*, was also song-oriented, but the production tended to iron out the differences between song styles.

Both the video for "Faroutski" and a recent *MTV News* segment show off the band's well-developed sense of humor, a definite plus in a genre overrun with heavy riffs and heavy handed sentiment. But the group would prefer to be judged by its musical output rather than its flair for high-concept comedy. Urge Overkill takes standard grunge-rock instrumentation and twists it into something altogether other

Americruiser was recently likened in these pages to a "punk rock *Eliminator*," and while I'm not sure the Urge boys would be entirely displeased with the ZZ Top comparison, I expect a bit more in the future from Urge Overkill than punkish reductions of time-worn rock truths. Keep your eyes on these guys They know what they're doing

JIM GREER

ALSO WATCH FOR



The Jack Rubies ▲

You'd have to be wearing blinders (and earplugs) to miss the Jack Rubies' wicked sense of humor They've even titled their last record *See the Money in My Smile*, and you don't have to dig deep into the treasure chest to discover that the lyrics accompanying their pumping Brit pop are delivered tongue firmly planted in cheek

The Jack Rubies get their kicks by taking the mick out of just about everything in the book of rock'n'roll, including themselves They build their snap, crackle, and pop around biting sarcasm

They've progressed considerably between this LP and their debut, *Fascinatin' Vacation*, on which they covered America's "A Horse With No Name" for quick laughs. This time around they've perfected the humor and songcraft on their own tunes.

"I swear to God," leader Ian Wright sings on one track with all the conviction of Bono, "I won't change the world, I haven't got the nerve." The album's got laughs aplenty, but even when they sing less cheeky songs they do it with sincerity and humility

The Jack Rubies make crafty loot-stompin' pop. What a concept. Fool's gold, in this case, is a real find.

RAYMOND ROGERS

Blues Traveler ▶

Blues Traveler is a band with legs that ass-kick the '60s into the '90s. Its feel-good fervor has magnetized a swelling tide of young "fellow travelers" around the country. Armed with a self-titled A&M debut album, Blues Traveler has been conquering college campuses with jazz-savvy blues-rock shows that orbit into hyperspace but always return to the groove

"Blues Traveler wants to make music real again," says rock godfather-manager Bill Graham, who wasn't surprised the band earned encores opening recently for Jerry Garcia and the Allman Brothers. "They're from the same realm as the Dead in that they'll always want to be close to the streets."

Blues Traveler sprang out of Manhattan's network of downtown dives. Popper lifts the blues harp to the demonically celestial realms of Charlie Parker Guitarist Chan Kinchla, weaves intricate spirals around the bone-rattling mantras of bassist Bob Sheehan, and the slow burn steadiness of drummer Brendan Hill, explodes with sudden intensity

Blues Traveler's no-safety net jams have a fluid ferocity, and a voice uniquely their own. The band play Pan to a new wave of kids who are reinventing the '60s

CREE McCREE

TOP TO BOTTOM JOSH MILLER, TUT RECORDS, STEVE EICHNER

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ALSO WATCH FOR

Liquid Jesus ▼

Search through your addictions / Jane's all for the scene
—from "Bleed.ng Hearts'

There are a lot of bands surfacing that use "Jesus" as part of their moniker, so I can understand your confusion. The Jesus Lizard, Jesus Jones, the Jesus and Mary Chain, and I'm sure there're more, but these examples spring most directly to mind. Nevertheless, I'd advise you to pay attention to this particular religious organization. Liquid Jesus.

Remember Jane s Addiction? Of course you do. Well, it seems that band's success spawned a slew of like-minded heavy metal funkateers in the L A. area, of which Liquid Jesus stands the greatest chance of succeeding to the art/funk metal seat of honor (which is to say major labels are panting at the band's door). The big difference here is that Liquid Jesus's singer actually has a great voice, and the band knows whereof it funks. Musically Liquid Jesus has a lighter touch

than is usual for the genre

Rumor has it that Liquid Jesus has in fact signed to a major. (The band's previous record, *Liquid Jesus Live*, has been released on L.A. indie Triple X, an auspicious omen considering that label released Jane's Addiction's formative efforts.) So if you want to catch the band in unsullied action, catch it soon

JIM GREER

Gang Starr ▸

The rap group Gang Starr sees itself in the gangster style of Ice Cube, N W.A, and Public Enemy On its LP *Step in the Arena*, the group boasts a subsonic bass custom made for the outlaw s Jeep. But listen to the sax noodling, piano tinkling, and synth washes, and you wonder, gangster style? Here's a DJ who can create an elegiac emotion from any sample

Gang Starr's jazz leanings may be a product of the band's environment. In a supremely odd bedfellow arrangement, DJ Premier and the Guru shacked up with jazz purist Branford Marsalis after the rap duo collaborated with Marsalis on "Jazz Thing," a rap lesson in jazz history that forms the coda of Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*. As Branford and Gang Starr became tight friends, Branford got an earful.

"I didn't appreciate some of his heavy criticisms about rap," Premier continues. "So I explained to him what certain slang means, that the harsh language is like kids crying out on the record. I took him to my old neighborhood, East New York. Then he understood why the vibe was so heavy. Now he's telling me to get him the latest stuff."

JILL PEARLMAN

▲ Sister Double Happiness

"People don't really know what to expect when they see us," says Gary Floyd, the charismatic singer and lyricist for Sister Double Happiness, "because the name doesn't give any indication of what kind of music we do. We have hard-rock blues songs and ballad-country acoustic songs."

"And that seems perfectly natural to us," adds drummer Lynn Perko.

Sister Double inflicts its powerful brand of rock'n'roll on happy crowds in the Bay Area with a lineup that includes guitarist Ben Cohen and recently added bassist Jeff Palmer. But since the band's birth in 1986, there have been some speed bumps on the road to major label success.

"We put out an album on SST in 1988," says Gary. "Then I left the band for a year and went into a Hindu monastery. But I discovered I'm not a monk, I'm a rock'n'roll singer. Then we had to replace the bass player. Basically, it's just been some bad timing "

The band is being courted by Warner Bros. "With independent labels you have the freedom to do what you want," says Gary. "But if you're really serious about doing music, and you don't want to work at the pizza parlor on the side, you have to look toward a major label."

"So far, we all still have day jobs," offers Lynn.

LAUREN SPENCER

Teenage Fanclub ▼

I don't fucking care / How you wear your hair / You're still a fucking square.
—from "Everybody's Fool"

Teenage Fanclub is from Scotland, but don't let that bother you. The band's debut album, *A Catholic Education*, whips up enough pasty-faced guitar noise to make you forget the trendy pap produced by most U.K. bands these days.

The easiest comparison to make is with American guitar bands like Dinosaur Jr., but where Dinosaur's sound is largely derived from the Neil Young back catalog, TFC leans toward a more Stones-based brand of riff-rockery. Neither of TFC's guitarists (Norman Blake and Raymond McGinley) seems to enjoy playing lead guitar. This results in a leaner and less unwieldy sound and sets TFC apart from the sometimes-bloated concoctions of the band's American peers. Anyway, comparisons are kind of silly – the songs on this album are all strong enough to stand on their own.

In light of the major-label bidding war that's sprung up since *A Catholic Education*'s release, you'd better catch Teenage Fanclub soon—before the band's crushed to death by the pop machine. (Consider this story a love tap.)

JIM GREER

COUNTER-CLOCKWISE, TOP: RANEE COX; MICHAEL LLEWELLYN; KAREN MASON; MATADOR RECORDS

Masters of Reality ▶

In 1988, soon after Masters of Reality's first self-titled release for Rick Rubin's Def American label, the Syracuse-based band split in half, leaving only singer/guitarist Chris Goss and bassist Googe to carry on.

Even though Masters of Reality's music drew favorable comparisons to rock supergroups such as AC/DC and Zeppelin, the disc made only slight inroads on the charts. It did, however, garner the band quite a few serious fans—most notably Delicious Vinyl's Matt Dike and Michael Ross, who in 1990 decided the album deserved another chance to be heard. Dike and Ross bought the master tapes and, along with Chris and Googe, added a couple of new tracks, then remastered and resequenced it. "We tried to make it flow more," says Chris, laughing, "the first three songs in particular, because by then we've really suckered you in."

Daniel Rey (formerly guitarist for Dick Manitoba and producer of Circus of Power and Raging Slab) was brought on board. 'Matt asked me to come down to the studio," says Daniel. "I just went in and did it because, for me, the Masters album was the best thing I'd heard in years.'

Then, Ginger Baker, the infamous drummer from Cream, arrived on the scene. "I met the band at a party and got on quite well with them," says Baker. 'At first I thought it was going to be really loud and heavy metal. I was pleasantly surprised. I think we've already got a double album."

'I'd like to do this next record on the spur of the moment," says Chris, "because a lot of times the original takes of songs have a vibe that can't be replaced once you've rehearsed them 500 times. I don't see why a record should be any less in your face than a live show."

LAUREN SPENCER

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ALBAN CHRIST KARL STEPHEN CAPOLE SEGAL

ALSO WATCH FOR

◀ Subterranean Sky

Dominique Meeroff, who fronts and plays guitar for Subterranean Sky, has a voice both haunting and powerful. Subterranean Sky a New York City band (Meeroff fused with guitarist Chris Whittingham, bassist Art Baguer, and drummer Joe Whelan), makes moody and churning music with a U2-meets-the Pretenders flavor. All four members have diverse musical backgrounds, ranging from Dominique's involvement with Jamaican reggae artists Sly and Robbie to Chris Whittingham's jazz-inflected guitar work. Lyrically, the band probes subjects more challenging than your average rock fare, but don't think just because you hear intelligent lyrics—that you won't be drawn to the dance floor. Songs such as "Mountain" will have you doing the slow sway while "Promised Land" covers a landscape of danceable rock'n'roll. The band's five-song EP is available on the independent label Formica, P.O. Box 20857, Tompkins Sq. Station, NY, NY 10009.

The Gladstones ▲

If you like R.E.M., you'll love these guys. Their infectious college jangle (they're from Lincoln, Nebraska) as represented on their debut, *Jeremy*, grabs you by the earlobes and gives you an invigorating shake. We're still picking slivers of guitar jangle out of our hair. Likable, unintimidating stuff. See if you can get a hold of their debut before some major label snaps them up and splatters them all over MTV. You can contact the Gladstones at P.O. Box 80541, Lincoln, NE 68501.

Snatches of Pink ▲

"We've been together way too long" is Snatches of Pink member Michael Rank's way of saying the band has existed for five years This trio from North Carolina rounds out the mix with drummer Sarah Romweber (sister of Dexter from Flat Duo Jets) and bassist Andy McMillen. They make rock'n'roll you can sweat to good, grungy, and tuneful—and are a quite awesome live experience. After a somewhat frustrating stint with Dog Gone Records, the Snatches are currently shopping their music around. If you can't find the band's albums in your local record store, write to Dog Gone at P O Box 1742, Athens, GA 30603 and make them send you a copy of *Dead Men*.

The Good Guys ▶

"Our angle is about the betterment of self, and our music is a celebration and recognition of the power the individual has," says Jimi Gore, vocalist and guitar player for Richmond, Virginia's The Good Guys. Jimi and his two bros, Harry (guitar) and Chris (drums), rock the house with Kevin Vines (bass) and a percussion section made up of Nat Zolan (trumpet, congas) and Brian Zabriskie (trombone). The band is part of the Black Rock Coalition and it wreaks havoc on any attempt at categorization. Funk rock, soul, and blues are all a part of their repertoire. This is *perfect* party music. Get a copy of their tape through Atypical Management, 153 Ave B, New York, NY 10009

Sloth ▲

Not only one of the seven deadly sins, but a kick-ass rock'n'roll band that has been described by some literary types as "Guns N Roses caked in Bowery grit." Jed Parker leads the pack with some wicked warbling that is matched in velocity only by Mike Hottman's guitar playing, Greg Ganter's bass lines, and Chris Raymond's drumming. Sloth comes out full force on such ditties as "Fetch the Wedge" and "Miss Sleazy Underbelly." The band hails from Brooklyn (metal capital of the world and home of famed metal club L'Amour), and you can write for a copy of Sloth's single at Baylor Records, 48 Monitor St Brooklyn, NY 11222

Osgood Slaughter ▶

"A buncha goofy motherfuckers" is the way one unnamed source described them, but that ain't all this band has going for it. It's been a well-kept San Francisco secret since 1987. Frontman Bruno Bersani leads this motley pack, with extra flavor added by John Cobbet (guitar), Tim Murphy (bass), Rich Morin (guitar), and Chewy Marzolo (drums). It's metal with a message: a twisted one For a tape (along with a periodical newsletter from Bruno's mom Broncey), write to Osgood Slaughter, 109 Appleton St., San Francisco CA 94110

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THE LOS ANGELES BAND FUNHOUSE HAS A COMBINATION OF ROCK'N'RAG GUARANTEED TO KICK YOU 'ROUND THE BLOCK.

FUN HAD TO BE

WHOEVER COINED THE TERM laid-back for the citizens of Los Angeles hadn't met the boys in Funhouse. That word ain't in their vocabulary.

"When I was 15," says Chris Hazard, "I got into trouble 'cuz I was more into surfing than going to school. So my parents sent me to boarding school in Tahoe, where there wasn't an ocean. I got into skiing, and the first week I went on this ski bike and broke my collarbone, so then I had to start ice skating and playing hockey."

A pretty perilous beginning for L.A. home-towner Hazard. He grew up on the shores of Venice and Malibu in California and fronts the band Funhouse which also includes Marc Vachon on lead guitar, Joe E. on rhythm guitar, Cat on bass, and Jon Hill on drums.

The guys in Funhouse make a habit of skateboarding to wherever they need to be because, besides being good for the ozone layer, Chris says, "Now it saves me money with the oil crisis and all." In L.A. you'll often see packs of skate rats riding through busy intersections while holding onto the backs of buses and choking on the exhaust—for a free ride.

Marc's been skateboarding since he was 10. "When I go on tour," he says, "my board goes with me. It's a good way to escape from everything, 'cuz when you're rolling on your board you turn 13 again. A lot of my friends say, 'God, you never grew up,' and I just say, 'Yeah, you're saying that now, but when I sell a million records . . . you know, you're

This page—

Opposite page—guitarist

MARKUS MORIANZ

INDEPENDENT
SANTA CRUZ

(Clockwise from top left. (1) Bassist Joe E.'s sneaks: Reebok; shirt: Body Equipment; stretch jeans: Meow/Bulldog. (2) Drummer Jon Hill's and singer (3) Chris Hazard's hats: Altess; overalls: Meow/Bulldog. (4) Clockwise from top left, T-shirt: Meow; pants: Bulldog; sneaks: Nike; T-shirt: Body Equipment; pants: Stickle; overalls: Meow/Bulldog; sneakers: British Knights; hats: Altess; sunglasses: Ray-Ban. (5) From left, Sneakers, hat: British Knights; tank top: Body Equipment; T-shirt: Body Equipment; sunglasses: Ray-Ban. Styling by Ashlyn Gardner.

MARKUS MORLANZ

gonna respect that ' "

The band Funhouse has been an attraction on the L.A. music scene since 1986, opening for such rock bad boys as Guns N' Roses and Danzig. Funhouse's album, *Generation Generator*, is a full-on assault of metal and melody in the fine tradition of sweaty rock n'roll. "I like a lot of the old stuff," says Marc, 'I grew up on Zeppelin and Deep Purple. Hendrix I didn't get into until the last few years, but now I love him."

"Marc's more into the blues," adds Chris, "so any of those overtones are his, while I'm more into the heavy side of music."

When you go to a Funhouse gig you'll find a good percentage of the audience decked out in a pot pourri of foppery that looks like Alice in Wonderland meets the mean streets. Most of what the guys wear onstage is stitched by Chris's girlfriend, Ashlyn, with headgear sewn by Marc. "I try to make hats as much as I can," he says, "like two or three a day. I have a good time sitting down and putting them together. But when we have to rehearse, we rehearse, and when I have to write, I put down the hats and we write."

Funhouse makes it its business to fuse kick ass music with funked-out fashion. "We want to be a hundred percent with everything," says Marc. "We want to have a killer look, and we want to have killer songs, but our music comes first. It's like I say to everybody, 'You can't see the band when you're listening to the album.' "

LAUREN SPENCER

SAMHAIN
THE FINAL DESCENT

SAMHAIN • FINAL DESCENT
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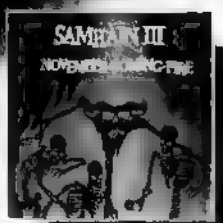
RELEASED OCTOBER 31, 1990



SAMHAIN • NOVEMBER SCREAMING FIRE

SAMHAIN • INITIUM

MISFITS • LEGACY OF BRUTALITY

MISFITS

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MISFITS • DIE DIE MY DARLING

PLAN 9

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NEW ORLEANS
Saints

Both wear the mask of the invulnerable ultra-man. Both are naked aggressive—one physical, one metaphorical. Both are in a business where the competition is ruthless. Neither of them have ever heard of Morrissey.

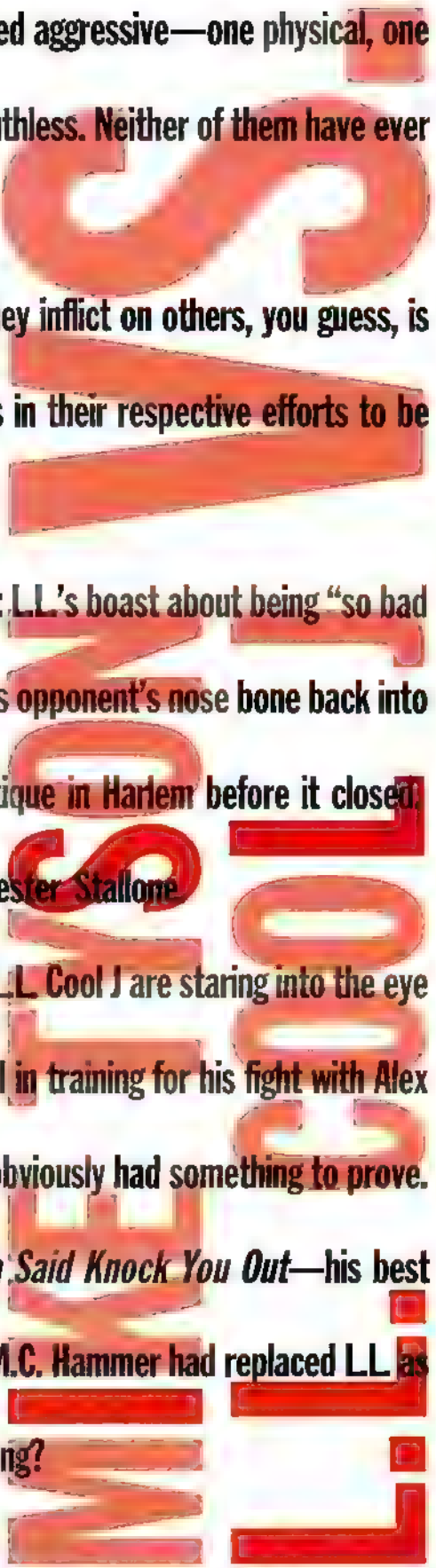
Both are intensely disciplined individuals: The punishment they inflict on others, you guess, is nothing compared to the punishment they inflict on themselves in their respective efforts to be bigger, doper, swifter, smarter.

Both have said things that make even their supporters wince: LL's boast about being "so bad I can suck my own dick," and Tyson's comments about driving his opponent's nose bone back into his brain. Both used to shop for clothes at Dapper Dan's boutique in Harlem before it closed.

Either one of them would make a better Rocky than Sylvester Stallone.

Young, black, wealthy, and legal as they are, Mike Tyson and L.L. Cool J are staring into the eye of the tiger. Or *were* at the time of the interview. Tyson was still in training for his fight with Alex Stewart, and, after the loss of his world heavyweight crown, he obviously had something to prove. L.L. Cool J also had something to prove. His new album *Mama Said Knock You Out*—his best since his debut, *Radio*—had just hit the street, but, given that M.C. Hammer had replaced L.L. as the rapper everyone loves to hate, was the street still listening?

MT and L.L. Cool J. Siskel and Ebert they ain't.



VIRGINIA L. BERATORE

SPIN: Talk about the similarities between hip hop and boxing.

L.L.: The only similarities, as far as I see, between boxing and rapping is—

TYSON:—competition.

L.L.: When you comin' up, they say, "Yo, make it, I wanna see him make it, I wanna see him make it." But—

TYSON:—once you at the top they all yell, "Your head is big." When you get to the point where they wished for you to get to, they want you to fuckin' drop. You go back in the neighborhood, and because of your schedule, you can't hang out with them. And then they can't relate to you no more. They say, "Well, he's changed, he's flipped on us, and he's a sellout now." I mean, you still love 'em and everything, but every time you come home you gotta give out a coupla hundreds here, a hundred there. There's like fifteen-thousand people asking for a hundred dollars or a coupla thousand. You're all screwed up. I love Brooklyn. You try and do as much as you can, but, you know, you can't feed the whole nation of poverty. The country can't even do it.

L.L.: They could, but they won't.

SPIN: Do you think it's important for both boxers and rappers to keep in touch with their neighborhoods? Isn't that where they get their initial inspiration?

L.L.: The thing that the best rappers and the best boxers have in common is not their color or whatever. It's poverty. They're all broke, and there's no money. So, everybody's hungry. I mean you wanna be the best.

L.L. Cool J. "The thing that rappers and boxers have in common is not their color or whatever. It's poverty. They're all broke."

SPIN: But there are a lot of middle-class rappers nowadays.

L.L.: Personally, I didn't come from complete poverty, but I mean, it was like a ghetto situation. In my neighborhood, some were robbing because they had to, but others were robbing because it was fun. Like, I'm gonna rob this guy and take his money, and it's funny.

TYSON: You get no worse than that where I come from in Brooklyn. Brownsville. I was talking to my friend today, man. He's a suburbanite from Albany, New York. He was saying, "Yeah, I just got out a month ago. I just finished 11 years." And we were discussing it like he'd just had a drink of water, or come out of a country club. And he was saying he was in for murder and in the same breath he said, "Man, it's crazy out here. Everybody's killing everybody." What the hell is he worried about? He just came out of prison for killing somebody.

SPIN: Has it gotten worse since you were there?

TYSON: I don't believe it's gotten worse, it's just that—

L.L.:—you're outside of it, looking in.

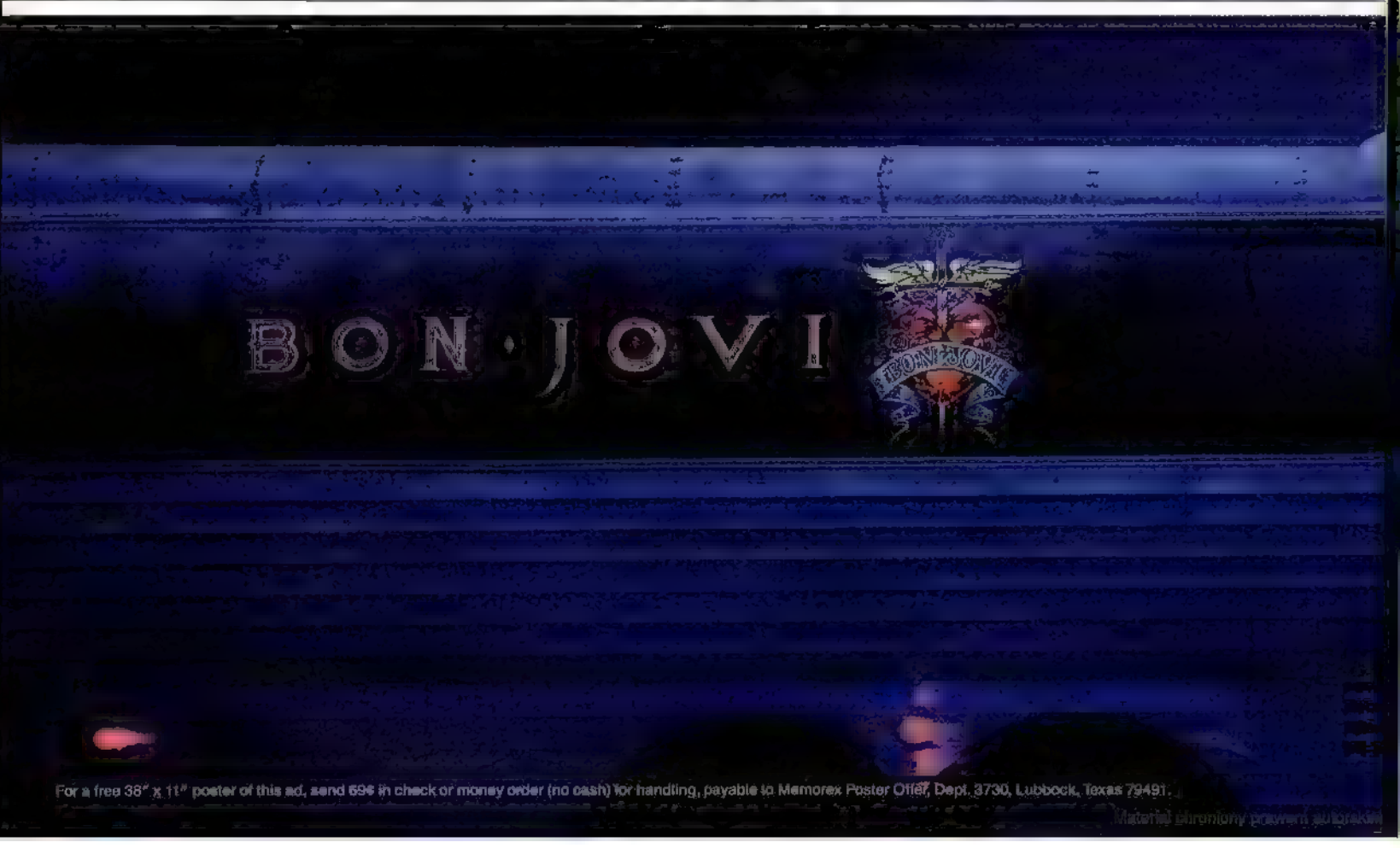
TYSON: I'm outside being very objective. Now, I understand about things. Whoa! What's this? Seen the shit they got? I mean, see what's happenin' down there. It's a way of life, man.

L.L.: I know.

TYSON: And it's that way because what society did to us over four hundred years. You know what I mean. They have you hating yourself. Once you don't have no respect for yourself, anything's bound to happen.

L.L.: Hmmm.

TYSON: That's why I'm a rap fanatic. People say, "Why are you pro-rap when you have so much? That's violent music." I tell them, "We grew up on



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rap for one reason. The only way you can understand the message is if you live it. We live it. We say fuck the police, because we're frustrated at them when we're with our girls, and they call us 'boy.' We're frustrated at them when they search and humiliate us." Like, sometimes I'll get mad when I get pulled over. The cop wants to be a wiseass because of who I am. He says, "You might have a lot of money, Mike Tyson, but I'm the boss here." You know he got that attitude. You know, if you you're going to give me a ticket, give me a ticket. Don't give me a ticket and a lecture. As soon as he leaves, I put on N.W.A's "Fuck tha Police"—"fuck the police" coming straight from the underground. You know, fuck that shit, man.

SPIN: There's a track on L.L.'s new album called "Illegal Search" which is precisely about that.

L.L.: It's just a track that deals with the fact that you can't ride around in a nice car. Can't a young black man, you know, make money anymore? Not all police officers—I don't wanna stereotype 'em—but certain police officers, you know, abuse their position. They just wanna rip you out of the car.

TYSON: Embarrass you. Because a guy's Italian or wears a silk suit doesn't mean he's a gangster. Because a guy's black and has a nice car doesn't mean he's a drug dealer.

L.L.: And then they try to tie in the fact that there's violence at rap concerts. And what I tell 'em is, "Look, you know, the reason why there's no violence at classical music concerts is because the type of crime these people commit is white collar crime."

TYSON: They're embezzlers.

L.L.: They do their crime at work. Then they go to the concert, calm as a motherfucker. They're also crooked as a motherfucker. What I'm saying is the kind of crimes that a lot of the urban audiences commit is like, "Give me your jewelry, give me your money,"—right here, this particular money right here. They don't know, you know, the routine and the paperwork and all the procedures to go through to steal money from the bank.

SPIN: Both of you are young black male millionaires. What's that like? It doesn't happen to many people in your positions.

TYSON: I don't think so, no. It's a great position. But when you got a lot of money, you got a lot of problems.

L.L.: My problem's taxes.

TYSON: Yeah, I hate taxes. More than anything—they can take your money and all that stuff. But you know what they do? They humiliate you. Like, I can handle being broke, but it's just the fact of being humiliated.

SPIN: Both of you have been criticized for your attitude toward women.

L.L.: Well, one thing a woman can never say: that I disrespect women. Because I made records like "I Need Love." So that shows you right there that I definitely have the utmost respect for women 'cause my mother's a woman! I love my mother, my grandmother. I respect women.

TYSON: I'm not a rapper and I can't put my feelings across about how I feel about women. But, uh, any woman that ever was involved with me left with more than what they came with. *(Laughs)* You know what I mean? They got the better end of the deal. I love women. I like to be around as many as I possibly can.

SPIN: Have either of you got plans to make any movies?

L.L.: I just made a movie with Michael J. Fox and James Woods. It's called *The Hard Way*.

TYSON: James Woods is a deep brother.

L.L.: Yeah. I play an undercover cop. It's cool! It's cool.

SPIN: You're gonna do more of that?

L.L.: Well, I'm not acting. I'm for real, and the only reason I'm in the movie is just so people can see me one-to-one and maybe think I'm funny and get into my music. See what I'm sayin'? 'Cause, yo, I still wanna make records.

TYSON: A lot of people offer me money to do movies. But I'm a fighter. You know what I mean? I'm not someone to spread around.

L.L.: You ever hang out after a fight? Like right after, go right out?

TYSON: Usually, I wanna make love *(laughs)*.

SPIN: You don't do it before the fight? You don't have sex.

TYSON: Sometimes, depends. When I was married I'd do it up to the day of the fight. It's really psychological. If I'm not married, I don't wanna bring no girls up here. Because if I bring one girl then I wouldn't mind bringing another one. And then my mind just gets all confused. You know what I mean?

SPIN: Are you looking to get married again?

TYSON: It's crazy to get married. I'm thinkin' about all

the money that I have and I think, How the hell would a 21-year-old guy get married with all of that cash? I must have been out of my fuckin' mind.

SPIN: You were saying in a recent interview how people in boxing don't like you, Mike, and it's been said that some people in hip hop don't like L.L. Any comparisons there?

L.L.: People in basketball, some don't like Jordan, from what I hear. I mean, people don't like when you do well.

TYSON: You got five dollars. The other man got four dollars. The guy with four dollars is gonna be mad. Especially if he's a competitor.

L.L.: Just like [M.C.] Hammer. A lot of people don't like Hammer. Personally, I respect Hammer. I respect what he's doin'. And you gotta God bless, and let him get his. He's dancing and he's successful at it, and I can't disrespect him for it because he has a formula and it's working.

SPIN: Let's go back to comparisons. Hip hop—a lot of people in music don't like it. Boxing—a lot of people in the sport industry don't like it.

TYSON: Because boxing is the only sport where you can be a tenth-grade dropout, practically an illiterate, and still make a hundred-million dollars and surpass socialites—guys that have been rich all their lives. You know, quasi-bourgeois types that go to Harvard, Cambridge, Yale, and they say, "Oh my God, how dare they . . ."

L.L.: I hate it when people talk about Mike, and say shit like, "Yeah, you know, but does he got a brain," and I say, "How the fuck can he do what he does if he hasn't got a brain?" You got to be a genius to be a champion. You've gotta be a genius to constantly win, because you got to remember all the movements, and all the four-five shit. All that is mental. With boxing, the physical part is only half the fight, then you got to have your mental act together. Fearless, quick, reflexes—you got to be a genius to do it.

TYSON: I'm not a fucking neurosurgeon or anything,

"When white people first came to Africa, we owned the land and the white man had the Bible. And when they finished, they had all the land and we had the Bible. So if there is a God up there, he don't like niggers."

—Mike Tyson

or a fuckin' physical scientist, I'm a goddamn fighter, who, thank God, is capable of dealing with such people. When I hang out with my friends I'm not out here, "Theoretically speaking, you know." I'm like, "Ooh, I'm going to tear that ass up when I see it. Let's make this money. Let's go." We still shoot dice. I'm still winning money, I don't give it back. We still play. That will never change.

SPIN: How do you think people would react differently to you if you were a white fighter?

L.L.: He'd be the best. The best ever. I'm telling you the best ever.

Mike Tyson: "People say, 'Why are you pro-rap when you have so much? That's violent music.' I tell them, 'The only way you can understand the message is if you live it.'"

TYSON: It'd be different. It's tough for me to say that, because if you're white and they don't think much about you, they'll be the first ones to kick your ass, like they did to Gerry Cooney.

SPIN: How would you be different, L.L.?

L.L.: If I was white? I'd probably be four or five times bigger. Look at New Edition and New Kids on the Block. New Edition is a hot group. New Kids on the Block, they're white, they blew up. They got bubble gum. New Edition don't have fucking bubble gum. You know what I'm saying?

SPIN: Aren't you both as popular with white people as black people?

L.L.: Oh, no question. But I've always said, that's why when people say, "L.L., hey, like, on the last album, you sold out," I say, "Yo, can I ask you a question, Mike Tyson sell out?" "No, he's a brother." I say, he's a cross-over artist. He went pop. You know what I'm saying? I mean, the rap audience can be a selfish audience, they have to understand that their music is for all people. Me personally, I don't think it's about being black or white, I think it's about everbody being all right.

SPIN: Do you both believe in God?

L.L.: I believe in God.

TYSON: I'm a believer. I've been baptized. I've experienced a lot of bad shit, I've met a lot of bad preachers. Hey, look at my man, caught jerking off, what's his name, Swaggart? Jimmy. Now if that was Jesse Jackson, they would have nailed that nigger to a cross.

L.L.: Personally, I think you got to have a personal faith between you and God. You don't have to worry about the evangelists on TV saying, "Send me six-fifty, and get this pamphlet." You got to do your own personal thing.

TYSON: You got to do your thing. Because when white people first came to Africa, we owned the land and the white man had the Bible. And when they finished, they had all the land and we had the Bible. So if there is a God up there, he don't like niggers.

SPIN: Do you really think that?

TYSON: Yeah!

L.L.: I believe in God completely. Maybe the people who suffer now will get rewarded later, you know? He likes black people, I guess, because the slaves got free. And things eventually get better over time. Maybe not in our lifetime we won't see a black president, but all those things will eventually come.

TYSON: Yeah, when there's a black president, he'll still be kicking niggers in the ass.

L.L.: Yeah. Well, that's the nature of people.

TYSON: People are basically evil. People basically suck. The people that are not evil—because there are some people that are gentle at heart—those people will be taken advantage of.

L.L.: What do you think they mean when they say, "God bless the child that has his own"?

TYSON: You got to go out there and get yours. Sometimes when you're white you get ahead, and I'm not talking from a racist perspective. I was raised by white people, you know what I mean? I know your language, I'm a brother to a bone. And white people told me, "Because you're black, you're going to be treated in a different way." And you know, deep down inside, being black is tough. You're going to be shit on.

SPIN: Rap is under attack from the censors at the moment. Why is that happening?

TYSON: Why? Because rappers are niggers making money. You know why people don't like hip hop? It's because they're making money. Why do you think black businessmen don't get corporate loans, how come they don't get 200 million dollars to run a corporation? No way. Before, they said that black people didn't have the intellect. But when they integrated, that broke down that shit. Now we're mentally equipped, give us the loans. Like they gave Donald Trump too many loans. I can take a black guy with a Ph.D. or M.B.A. from Cambridge or Harvard, a bourgeois black guy, he fucked out. And he's talking to black people and he's saying, "C'mon, put our money together, let's do this." People will be looking at him saying, "Nigger, you crazy?" On the other hand, I can get a drunk homeless white guy, shave him down, wash him up and put him in a Versace or Armani suit, and have him say, "Give your money to me," and all these niggers will give their shit to the white boy. That's because they think niggers can't do shit on their own, only the white man can give them their freedom.

LL: My father said that the black woman was a sucker for a white man in a suit. Like they believed, "Don't worry mama, I'm going to take care of it."

TYSON: Yeah, that's true. I'm not saying all white people are fucking bastards. It's just that, when you have the power to do something, you shit on people. That's the way people are. You have to be a very different kind of individual not to be that way. You know why the black people love the white man so much? It's because they promise us everything, but give us nothing. As long as you've got the faith—"Oh yeah, we're gonna get it." Then you go, "Goddamn, we almost had it." *(Laughs)* Fuck that! I want everything, man. I want it all. I won't stop 'til I get it, man. I'm a serious brother. My money better mean something to you, motherfucker, 'cause a lot of others don't have it! I don't want to be around nobody who says, "I don't like money." If you don't like money, I can't relate to you. A banker once told me, "Money is the report card of life."

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EBONY AND IVORY

One is the quintessential white, easy-listening artist from a middle-class Jewish background, the other a streetwise black who's best known for producing Public Enemy, the quintessential rap group that, some argue, attacks white, middle-class values. SCOTT COHEN arranged a meeting of two very different minds—Paul Simon's and Hank Shocklee's—at Simon's office in the Brill Building in New York, where the following conversation took place.

PAUL SIMON: This was a very famous building. All the early rock'n'roll record companies were located in this area and this was the class building. When we were 14, Artie [Garfunkel] and I used to come into the city with my guitar and knock on the doors and sing. Then, when we were 15, we made our first record.

HANK SHOCKLEE: When I came into the city I would knock on people's doors and get them slammed in my face. I was a DJ in a few record pools, so I had a feel for the companies and knew who was putting out the hit records and who needed help. I stopped going around when I couldn't get anyone to listen to my demos and ended up making records live on the radio, because there wasn't enough rap records being supplied by the companies.

SPIN: Was this when you were 14?

SHOCKLEE: This was '84, '85. I wasn't looking for a record deal when I was 14, no way. I was still on the streets, playing football, baseball, and basketball.

SIMON: So was I. People during my time were making records at that age, though. Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers really were teenagers.

SHOCKLEE: We got kind of dogged in the disco crunch. After '79, '80, companies weren't signing anybody. To make a record was like the most incredible thing in life. The only people we really had on wax were Sly and the Family Stone, James Brown, and Earth, Wind and Fire. These were major groups. Cutting an independent record was, like, no way.

SIMON: When I was a kid all there was was independent record companies. Majors didn't record rock'n'roll. Record companies were just tiny little cubicles.

SHOCKLEE: I think the same thing happened for us in rap. There were no majors. Tommy Boy, Profile—those were the major rap labels. Kurtis Blow was actually the first rapper signed to a major, and that was Mercury. Other than that, most of these records were distributed out of the backs of cars: Enjoy Records, Sugar Hill Records, the Sound of New York. And if you made a 12-inch, it was considered, like, *wow*. But if you made an album—now, that was inconceivable. I mean, rappers never got to do an album.

SIMON: When I was a kid, they didn't have albums. But radio used to be so good. You could hear really different stuff. I was thinking there might be a correlation between format radio and the polarization of the society. When you start to divide everything up into categories, you never get to hear the interesting stuff from the other groups.

SHOCKLEE: When I grew up, in order for us to hear a Supremes record or Sly Stone, you had to suffer through Blood, Sweat and Tears. That's why I have such a wide musical interest. Back then you had to battle against the best rock'n'roll record, the best blues, the best jazz. Music should be competitive all the way around.

SIMON: This is another example of corporate damage. Because sponsors can hit their demographics perfectly this way, they have a radio format that appeals exclusively to the audience that'll buy their product.

SHOCKLEE: Most people who appreciate music listen

BROOKE NEHARDT

to a lot of different music.

SIMON: What did your family listen to?

SHOCKLEE: My father was a strict jazz buff—Wes Montgomery, Jimmy Smith, Thelonious Monk, Cannonball Adderley. I hated it. I'd sneak in my mother's room and there'd be a Nancy Wilson or an Aretha Franklin. Some people have a gift. You put them in a setting and you see the magic. Then there's others who got to work and work at it. Aretha Franklin had the magic. My example would be Chuck D versus a Flavor [Flav; both of Public Enemy]. Chuck works very hard at his craft, whereas Flavor, he just has a magic. He goes in—one take and it's finished. Biz Markie—one take; Slick Rick—one take; L.L. Cool J—he works a lot at his craft.

SPIN: Have you done many songs in one take?

SIMON: No, I tend to be in the other category. I began *The Rhythm of the Saints* in March of '88.

SPIN: Do you wish you were a one-take guy?

SIMON: I think everybody wishes they had that instant, effortless gift. On the other hand, people who can have the persistence to stay with it, that's a gift as well. Basically, you're working with what you have. You're still trying to get to some kind of truth about what's in your mind or in your heart. Some people seem to be able to do that effortlessly, but for all we know, they're doing a lot of thinking, too. They're making split decisions at an amazing rate, and they're going through the same editing process, but it's incredibly fast.

SHOCKLEE: A lot of it is on impulse and feel. If someone took your sight away, you're going to use a lot of impulse and feel really quick, or you're going to fall down a flight of stairs. But there are drawbacks. Usually artists like that don't last as long as those who work hard. One might pick up a drinking or a drug habit because it goes with the normal flow of their existence.

SIMON: One of the worst aspects of this culture is that we romanticize that early-burnout, self-destructive, die-young attitude. For some people, that's their destiny, but then they become cultural icons, and you got a whole people out there dying young for no reason.

SHOCKLEE: Right now, there's a different pattern, and it's not to be an icon. It's a love of money and fame. Once you add the two together, it's like bleach and ammonia. They're perfectly harmless when separated, but put them together and they create a lethal gas. That's what this society is producing. It's no longer producing a craft. Forget about music. If you find a plumber these days, he's into it for the money, and he wants to get famous. That's all he cares about. He doesn't care that he's coming into your place and destroying your plumbing.

SIMON: They said Madonna, Milli Vanilli, and Janet Jackson were lip-synching. Madonna, who's as shrewd an entertainer as there is, comes up with a logical answer: Hey man, it's a performance. What's the difference if I'm lip-synching or not? So I didn't sing. I'm dancing. It's another thing. The answer to that is a great concert performance that's spontaneous and live—so the audience is moved in some way—that can't possibly happen in the lip-synched way.

SHOCKLEE: You get a person who says, "I don't have time to study an instrument." Rappers sample. There's a difference between plagiarizing and sampling. You take a horn hit here and insert it somewhere where it has a different application than it had in its original context—that's creative sampling. You got people who are forgetting about the horn hit, they're taking half of the song or the intro to the song. And now that we like that intro so much, we'll take the chorus. You got that mentality happening.

SIMON: Yes, you do. You're saying the guy who takes half the song is not someone you admire as much as the guy who takes the right horn hit and puts it in the usual spot. My question is, How are you going to make your case for the skillful plumber, the skillful sampler, the skillful performer, those people who have the potential to do better?

SHOCKLEE: You're talking about art versus commercialism. At this point, it's very difficult to be both. Five years ago in the record industry you had a little time to develop your art. Now these record companies don't want to hear about art. You're selling only a hundred-thousand records, you're out of here. We plant a seed today, and if it

continued on page 84

A COSMIC REVELATION.

GODDESS

By

SOHO

A stellar debut album from England's SOHO. Featuring the smash single, **"Hippychick."** Also includes **"Love Generation"** and **"Out Of My Mind."**

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Zbigniew Holdys, Poland's top rocker, was also the national campaign manager for Solidarity. JEFFERSON MORLEY reports that Zbiggy's band, Perfect, was the perfect band for a generation of young Poles. Now this post-Communist rock star is bidding to make it big in the West.

PERFECT MEETS THE NEW BOSS

THERE IS STUFF EVERYWHERE on the Berlin-to-Warsaw express. First-class compartments designed to seat six are jammed with a dozen people. The luggage racks are stacked to the ceiling with vinyl suitcases on top of plastic shopping bags bursting with bolts of fabric. On the floor and in the corridor, there are VCRs, cameras, video equipment, *doppelcassetten*, and boxes of fragile Italian glass. A weary Polish intellectual squats atop his Stereo Twin Midi sound system and sucks a cigarette called an American Coast.

We are rolling across East Germany, seven months after the fall of the Berlin wall. In four more months this country will cease to exist, the countryside will lose its country. Watching impassively is a handsome, middle-aged Polish man with a gold watch, a cheap sport coat, and a nicotine habit. He is heading home—and into the post-Communist future—lugging an electronic synthesizer in a carton labeled Fujitone III B Orgue Electronique. For him the fruit of freedom is a Japanese-made keyboard with a French name, being carted from Germany to Poland (the land of Chopin!) so that his kid, perhaps listening at home to Radio Luxembourg, can learn how to imitate pop musicians from Great Britain whose music is heavily borrowed from African-Americans living 5,000 miles away in the United States. Thus rock'n'roll, the universal language of Western popular culture, ceaselessly spreads.

This is nothing new. "For the past 20 years," notes Timothy W. Ryback in his book *Rock Around the Bloc*, "young people [in socialist countries] who should have found common ground in the ideology of Marx and Lenin have found it instead in the music of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones." Cliché has it that rock'n'roll is the music of rebellion, but in the Communist world it would be more accurate to say that rock was the music of capitalism, the soundtrack of life in the affluent and freer West. If that sounds unromantic, recall that economist Joseph Schumpeter defined capitalism as "a gale of creative destruction." Wherever it is popular, rock is a gale of creative destruction.

In the part of the world that used to be socialist, rock created a community of fans. At its worst, this community was simply a collection of consumers buying a fantasy of the West. At its best, it created a sense of possibility and integrity. "Rock musicians," wrote Václav Havel in 1976, "[are] the unintentional personification of those forces in man that constantly compel him to determine his own place in the world freely and in his own way, not to make deals with his heart and not to cheat his conscience [and] to call things by their true name." These forces don't always figure in the calculations of political experts, but it was these forces—and not, say, the MX missile—that erased Communism.

THE TRAIN CROSSES into Poland across the Oder, a sluggish, shallow brown river that creates a natural border between Germany and Poland. The Oder drifts between grassy banks and curls around some gray high-rise apartments buildings in the distance. Villages and little cities with names like Boczwec and Swiebodzin slip away in the glow of the late afternoon. Western Poland looks like western Pennsylvania, central New Jersey, or southern Ohio. It looks economically obsolete. There are rotting brick factories with railroad cars rusting on tracks that will never be used again. Shabbily dressed children run up to the train tracks to wave.

"This low, flat country is the cesspool of Eurasia," a Warsaw intellectual told Lawrence Weschler of the *New Yorker*. "Whenever history backs up to either side of us, the chaos and the carnage spill over into Poland."

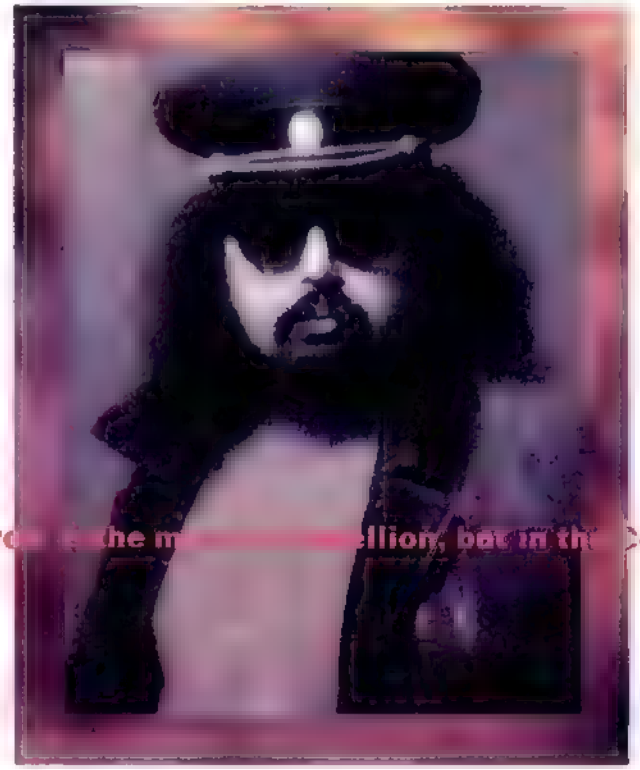
In this unlikely country, rock'n'roll exploded in the 1980s. For millions of young Poles, rock was the escape from the cesspool. The punk rock craze was as big in Poland as in any country in the world, maybe bigger. In this thoroughly white country, reggae enjoyed an improbable boom. (It was called *solidarity dub*.) Heavy metal came and never left. By 1989, Solidarity, the political movement that ousted the Communists, turned to the country's leading rock star, Zbigniew Holdys, and asked him to serve as the national campaign manager for the country's first free elections in 40 years.

NICK VACCARO

Material chroniony prawem autorskim

But, of course, rock is politically irrelevant. What matters for the children alongside the railroad track is not what they will hear on the radio, but what capitalism will create in the rubble of socialism. Some are already calling the Oder River the Rio Grande of the East. Just as the Rio Grande divides prosperous America from poor Mexico, many fear the Oder will divide middle-class Europe from backward Poland. "Are we going to become the Mexico of Europe?" ask worried Poles.

About a third of the passengers disembark at Poznan, a decaying, industrial city. The train is still crowded but at least we can breathe. The men and the women sitting in the shadows of the second-class compartments start to hit the vodka. A Russian girl listens to her Walkman, which emits sounds no doubt more influenced by Lennon than Lenin—but who knows what kind of political impact that may have? In the first car, a Polish boy smiles at me, pumping his fist. He's going to the bathroom to jerk off. The train is gliding eastward, away from a routinely beautiful orange sunset, and I'm staring out the window thinking, *Fuyitone III B Orgue Electronique?*



ZBIGGY HOLDYS IS—as he will himself tell you—a rock legend. The son of a Warsaw economist and a schoolteacher who belonged to the Communist party, he invented himself as the rock rebel of Eastern Europe. And who can say he's wrong? He looks the part. He has a body that belongs on a Harley-Davidson, a round, serious Slavic face, defiant lips, long black hair circa 1973, and an earring. He has the brains to mingle with some of the country's leading intellectuals as well as with the international press. He's 38 years old, his English is good, and, oh yes, he has a ton of rock'n'roll talent.

Cliché has it that rock'n'ro[ll] is the m[usic] of rebellion, but in the Communist world, rock was the

Zbiggy's band, Perfect, wasn't merely the most popular rock band in Poland in the 1980s. It was the cause of what one Polish DJ described to me as "Perfect mania." From its first show in 1981, the band drew sellout crowds wherever it played. Perfect fans knew all the lyrics to Zbiggy's songs, and sang them with gusto, especially the ones that tweaked the Communist authorities. "Pepe Come Back" was widely taken as a veiled plea for the return of Solidarity, after the movement was banned in 1981. "Autobiografia" is a long, simple melody with a lyric overflowing with details about growing up in Poland from the Stalinist '50s to the Solidarity '80s. "I Am Somebody" is a rousing rocker. Following Zbiggy's lead, Perfect fans altered the pronunciation of the chorus ever so slightly, changing the meaning from "I am somebody" to, roughly, "I slug a cop."

For a generation of young Poles, dreaming of the West and still stubbornly proud of their fucked-up country, Perfect was a perfect band, as accomplished as any Western band but singing in Polish about things Polish, such as the bittersweet pleasure of living in your parents' apartment and having nothing better to do than play Peeping Tom on the girl across the way. Perfect sold more than 3 million records, in a country of fewer than 40 million people.

Now Zbiggy wants out.

"You know that movie *Shane*, where the guy says, 'This town isn't big enough for the two of us'?" Zbiggy asks. "Well, this country isn't big enough for the two of me."

There's Zbiggy the rock star and Zbiggy the political activist, and the two keep bumping into each other. Now Zbiggy is leaving the politics behind for a shot at stardom in the West. He and his band are staying in a one-bedroom apartment in Warsaw and rehearsing a new set of songs, all in English. In a few weeks they'll leave for New York. Zbiggy doesn't doubt that Perfect can conquer MTV.

"A song is a product like any other product, and if it's good you can sell it smoothly," Zbiggy is quoted as saying in his 14-page press release. "So, if a song like this is performed by a strong clan of people, I mean band and a singer, and if it's arranged the way it shocks and brings listeners down on your knees, then you know you're on the right track. And I am the person, and we are the band. I am sure I can bring myself a brand-new quality to the show-biz monster."

LEGEND HAS IT that the whores of Gdansk gave birth to Polish rock'n'roll. In the late 1950s, Gdansk was a remote port of call for British and American sailors, who brought records by Bill Haley and the Comets and Jay and the Americans to parties with their local girlfriends. The first Polish rock'n'roll band, called Rhythm and Blues, was formed in Gdansk in 1958.

Rock'n'roll, commonly called "big beat" here, wasn't suppressed because no one, at least initially, took it seriously. The eruption of Beatlemania in 1964 disturbed the authorities but also fueled a hunger for homegrown rock. In 1966, the Polish national record company released the first Polish rock album by a group called the Blue and Blacks. Lead singer Czeslaw Nieman was the first Polish rock star. He sang pop soul songs in an inimitable style that combined Ray Charles and James Brown; he was reviled as a despoiler of youth.

The '60s in Poland were slightly different than in the West. While Berkeley, Chicago, Paris, and even Prague were bursting with countercultural rebellion, Poland was engaged in an old-fashioned pogrom. The Communist party, with a good deal of support from the people and little resistance from the Catholic Church, attempted to purge the nation's schools of "Jewish influence." The country was in chaos. Zbiggy, who is not Jewish, dropped out of secondary school three months before graduation.

He learned guitar by listening to primitive tape recordings of Western albums. "There was no original Polish rock music then," Zbiggy says. "It was like we belonged to a different country. Every one of us was working on his or her own asylum. It was the same all over Poland then. Writers wrote crime stories but only the Raymond Chandler style. There were Polish crimes, too, but everybody wanted to do it Chandler-style. In my band, all we wanted to know was how to play in Yardbirds style, in Pretty Things style."

He soon landed a job as a studio musician. In 1973 he started a band called Wild Child, named after the French movie by Francois Truffaut. The band played mostly covers of Western bands. In 1976, Wild Child launched a tour of Poland's small clubs. The authorities quickly shut down the tour and denounced the band as "unpredictable and unnecessary."

Zbiggy's generation was struggling to gain its identity, politically and culturally. He hung out at the Medyk Club in Warsaw with dissident artists and intellectuals. He was friends with a mathematician named Jan Litynski who edited an influential magazine called *Robotnik* ("*Worker*"). Polish rock was caught in the dead end of disco and a pompous brand of symphonic jazz-rock, so Zbiggy reshuffled his band, renamed it The Perfect, and decided to move to America. (Nobody quite knows when the *the* got dropped from the band's name.)

The band landed in Chicago. Zbiggy bought a Les Paul and schooled himself in the ways of the West, a Polish obsession. Perfect played polkas, Sinatra, and Top 40 hits, such as "You Don't Have to Be a Star," in the Polonaise restaurant. He took in shows by the Police, the Jacksons, and Queen. He was measuring the competition, absorbing every conceivable pop style. In the summer of 1980, the band returned to Poland.

It was Zbiggy's moment. A strike of shipyard workers in Gdansk attracted nationwide support. Zbiggy's activist friends in Warsaw joined with the

NICK VACCARO

striking workers to form Solidarity. He started going to meetings at the Ursus tractor factory, a huge industrial complex on the edge of Warsaw. When the sit-down strikes in the Gdansk shipyard spread to Ursus, Zbiggy was invited in to play one-man shows for hundreds of people. "Hey man, do you know any Hendrix?" some worker would call out, and Zbiggy would play "The Wind Cries Mary."

By the end of the year, it was obvious to Zbiggy that Poland was ready to rock. "I decided then," he says, "I had to make Perfect the number one band in the world." Perfect played its first gig at a student club in March 1981. The band's first album was released in the summer. Within weeks, six Perfect songs had hit the Polish Top 30.

Zbiggy was also in the thick of Solidarity activism. In late 1981, Solidarity announced a march on the headquarters of the Polish Communist party in downtown Warsaw. The police blocked off the streets, so the thousands of protesters simply sat down in the middle of a major intersection. It was known as the Crossroads Strike.

"I went with my equipment, an amp and a guitar," says Zbiggy. "And we just played around the clock. There were actors and musicians. It was amazing. This [was the] romantic part of our Slavic souls. Everyone was loving each other, helping each other. We were doing it to keep people in power."

On December 11, 1981, the Communist government imposed martial law and smashed Solidarity, arresting its leaders and suppressing its organizing activities. Zbiggy and other Polish rockers had long faced petty harassment from the government; they had always been required to submit lyrics to the censor, though Zbiggy hadn't always complied. But the martial law crackdown was not aimed at them. Indeed, in the summer of 1982, "the government gave rock bands a virtual carte blanche on radio and in concert halls," according to *Rock Around the Bloc*.

That didn't stop the police from publicly and privately threatening Zbiggy. A Perfect concert was usually an antigovernment affair. When Zbiggy spoke movingly from the stage about demonstrators killed at an antigovernment rally, the police fired tear gas into the hall. Yet at the same time, the government sanctioned Poland's first private record company. The company's first release was another Perfect album. It sold 1.2 million copies.

Zbiggy—who, incidentally, received no royalties on his record sales—struggled to find a political stance that was meaningful. He said he would not play "Autobiografia" and other hits composed before martial law was imposed. "Nothing can be the same after December 11," he said. In 1984, he joined up with three other veteran Polish rockers to record a harsh attack on the government called "Pigs." Then he recorded a self-consciously introspective double album called *I Ching*. Then he retired.

THE RED BOURGEOISIE, gave birth to Polish punk. The Red Bourgeoisie is the derisive name for the privileged class of Communist party officials. Their kids were frequently the first to pick up on the latest trends in Western rock.

Grzegorz Brzozowicz (let's call him Greg) was the son of a Communist party economist who had been assigned to work in Yugoslavia in the mid-1970s. Greg picked up on the Sex Pistols, the Ramones, and the Clash, and brought their records back to Warsaw. In 1981, he started working at the Remont Club in Warsaw, which was fast becoming punk rock headquarters. He dubbed the club's Friday night shows "Rock Front" and brought in punk bands from all over Poland and later from the West. The house band at Remont was called SS-20 after the biggest missile in the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Greg, now program director at one of Poland's first private radio stations, says the Communists had no idea how fast punk was growing. In 1977 Johnny Rotten had screamed that he had no future, but he really did. Polish punks really didn't.

"We said that your punks in the West lived in a golden cage," says Walter Chelatowski, one of the first rock promoters in Poland (and also the child of Communist party officials). "Our punks were really from the working class with no jobs, surrounded by police and priests, Russians, Communists, everything."

In 1979, Chelatowski had sponsored a rock festival in a circus tent in a small city outside Gdansk. It drew 600 fans. By 1984, he had moved the festival to Jarocin, a quiet town in western Poland. A three-day bill of punk and reggae bands attracted 15,000 to 20,000 fans. The headline show by SS 20 was a major event.

The politics of the punks, if they had any, were more radical than that of mainstream bands like Perfect. "Perfect was music for young people," says Greg. "It wasn't music by young people." The punks and Rastafarians were less accomplished musically and less articulate, but they were often bolder. SS-20 was outspokenly antimilitarist, not just anti-Communist. Kult, one of Poland's best young bands, criticized the church. A punk reggae band Brygada Kryzys (Crisis Brigade) did a song praising marijuana. The censors okayed the song because they didn't know what the word *ganja* meant.

music of capitalism, the soundtrack of life in the affluent and freer West.

The first album by Brygada Kryzys, Greg said, is one of the classics of Polish rock'n'roll. He played one monster cut from the album called "Centralna." The title means "central" not only in the sense of location but also in the sense of a headquarters. "It's where the orders come from," Greg explains. The song is a bass-grooved, minor-key rock anthem about the alienation of the spirit in a brain-dead socialist technocracy. The chorus goes, "We're just waiting for the signal from central." Until I heard that song, I didn't know what it was like to be young and Polish.

Today, the punk scene has faded. Many of the punk bands had watered down their sounds in hopes of signing up with the private record companies that sprung up in the late 1980s. The punk generation started growing up, getting married, having kids, and joining the great Polish scramble for a decent middle-class life. The fall of Communism has meant freedom to travel, to speak, to simply be free of Communism. The country is taking a break from rebellion.

Did the Polish rock revolution of '80s contribute to the collapse of Communism?

"Well, this is the great illusion of rock, isn't it?"

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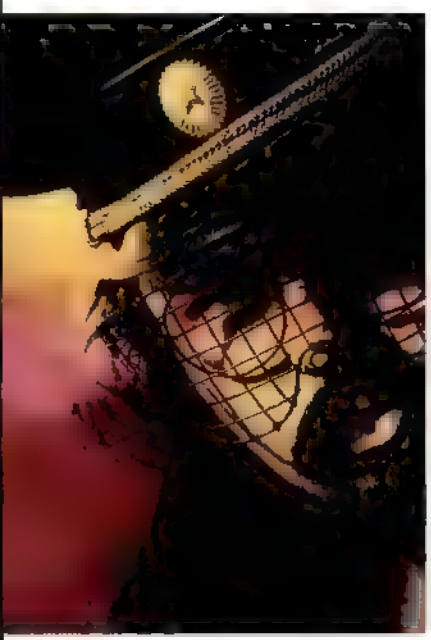
says Greg. "The illusion of rock rebellion. I would say that in this time [the 1980s], rock music gave us a connection to each other. It was like 'We are fans of rock music, therefore we are something.' Rock was part of our education."

The last hurrah of Poland's rock revolution was provided by Perfect. In 1987, Zbiggy, restless in his retirement, was drinking one afternoon at a jazz club in downtown Warsaw. He told the bartender that he played in a rock'n'roll band called Perfect. She said she'd heard of it and she thought it was perfectly stupid.

Zbiggy decided to prove she was wrong. The result was two huge concerts in Gdansk and Warsaw. The Warsaw show attracted 30,000 fans to a soccer stadium and ended with a massive antigovernment sing-along, candles, and glowing stories in the Western press. Voice of America described the concert as "a rock torpedo-killer."



Zbigniew Holdys, the Perfect rock legend.

The press and rock critics attacked the band for provocation. In a letter to the authorities, Zbiggy distanced himself from the political overtones of the show. A government spokesman promptly made the letter public.

"In a country whose fortunes ceaselessly sway between ennobling hope and shattering disillusionment," Ryback noted in *Rock Around the Bloc*, "the Holdys letter provided a humiliating but fitting denouement to punk's half decade of cathartic rage and scandalous glory."

Zbiggy stopped drinking and married the bartender.

IN 1989, WHEN ZBIGGY was working as campaign manager for Solidarity, he produced a television commercial featuring two spiked-hair Polish punks kicking a piece of paper in the streets of Warsaw. The only sound was Zbiggy playing a blues guitar riff. Solidarity officials canned the spot, saying it might be controversial with conservative rural voters. Then Zbiggy produced a campaign poster which Solidarity officials altered at the last minute without consulting him.

"That's when I realized they were not professional and that they can destroy someone's work," Zbiggy says. "They are really the same in propaganda as the Communists. They are brothers from the past."

Zbiggy quit about ten days before the election. In a letter published in the Solidarity newspaper after the election, he revealed that he hadn't even voted.

There is a popular show on Polish radio, *Filling in the Blank Pages*, which features historically important rock albums that somehow never made it to Poland. ("I'm playing *Marquee Moon* this week," one DJ told me. "No one in Poland has ever heard it.") For Zbiggy, the Who's hit from 1970, "Won't Get Fooled Again," was a blank page. Despite his immersion in Western rock, he had never heard Pete Townshend's epic of political disillusionment: "I get out my guitar and play / Just like yesterday / Then I get on my knees and pray / We don't get fooled again / Meet the new boss / Same as the old boss."

I heard echoes of "Won't Get Fooled Again" among many young Poles. They don't exactly equate the Solidarity government or the Catholic Church with the discredited Communist regime, but they see more similarities than you might expect between the new boss and the old boss.

In the city of Brodnica, the church and Solidarity officials in the city government joined forces to cancel the annual blues festival. "New government, old people," one Polish rocker commented wryly.

Young Poles are especially wary of the Catholic Church. Poland is probably the most Catholic country in the world, and native son Pope John Paul II is a national hero. But for the young, the church is no longer a refuge from Communism. It is an authoritarian power in its own right. Abortion is legal in Poland, but the church pressured the Solidarity government into requiring women who want abortions to obtain written permission from four doctors. The church is also pushing for mandatory Catholic education

continued on page 83

NICK VACCARO

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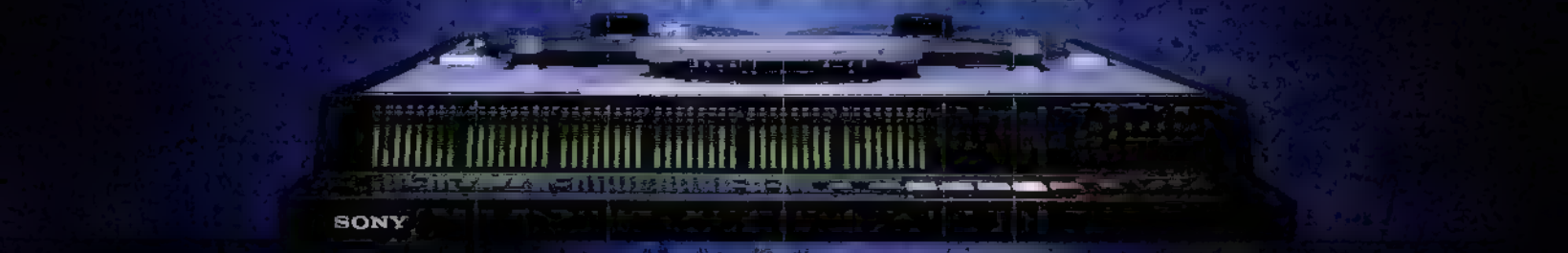

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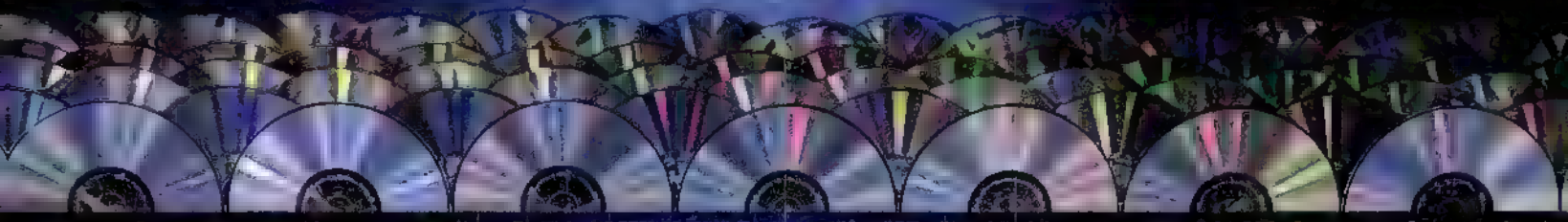

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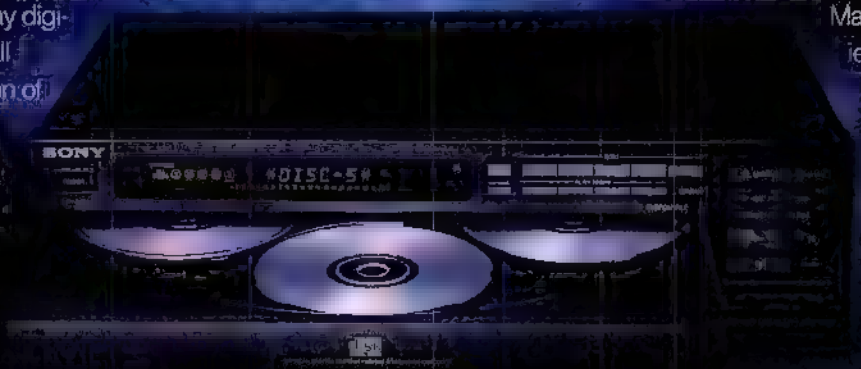

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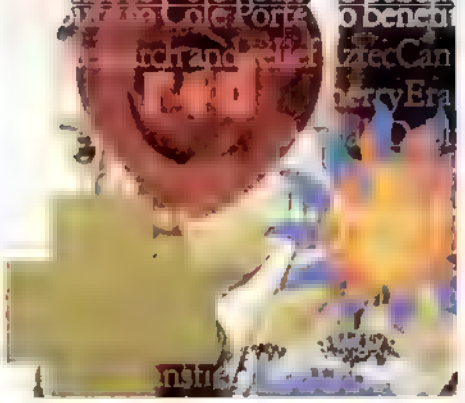
Red Hot and Blue, the star-studded album and television special, is rock'n'roll's first serious plunge into AIDS charity. JOHN CARLIN, who conceived the project, discusses how it came to be.



The Red Hot and Blue *album to benefit international AIDS charities was released last October with 22 of the best contemporary musicians—from U2 and Sinead O'Connor to David Byrne, Debbie Harry, and Iggy Pop—singing 21 songs by the American composer Cole Porter. In December, an ABC television special aired on World AIDS Day featuring the artists' renditions in 18 music videos created by such directors as Jim Jarmusch, Jonathan Demme, and Wim Wenders. A longer version of the special, available on video in the U.S. in April, aired throughout the world on the same day. That Cole Porter's songs were finally interpreted by our best musicians would have been an important enough undertaking; that this represents the first serious effort of the rock'n'roll community both to raise money to fight AIDS and to increase AIDS consciousness, makes it a monumental event.*

AIDS
WORDS FROM THE FRONT

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO I was sitting in a small office in a large New York law firm practicing corporate entertainment law. At the same time I had a secret life as a downtown art writer and curator and was becoming devastated by the effect AIDS was having on the creative community around me.

Why, I wondered, hadn't there been any major rock'n'roll AIDS benefits? After all, AIDS ravages young creative people and could be prevented by educating kids who turn to rock music and video for cultural inspiration. With impassioned naiveté I began to plot the outlines of *Red Hot and Blue*. The premise was simple: Get today's most creative pop stars to record new versions of a single composer's classic pop songs. Cole Porter seemed the obvious choice. He was the most sophisticated songwriter of his era, and the songs he wrote, besides approaching the subject of sex with wit and frankness, also foreshadowed the feelings of longing and loss created by the AIDS epidemic.

All this would have remained a pleasant daydream if I hadn't met filmmaker Leigh Blake a few years earlier. I shared my idea about an AIDS benefit album with Leigh, who immediately told me it was way too old-fashioned and had the potential to be the ultimate boring-old-farts-take-a-trip-down-memory-lane album.

A few days later, Leigh called me back and said, What about taking the album concept and expanding it into a pop culture event? To be exact, a film which would combine the music with the best contemporary visual art, film, and video—sort of a time capsule of cultural forces in the 1990s standing up to fight the disease that threatens to wipe it out. Leigh was hooked.

I ran the idea past Rick Pappas, an office associate who happened to represent the Cole Porter Trusts, and he immediately got involved, securing the trusts' blessings. The trusts, and Porter's music publisher, Warner/Chappell, agreed to waive the fees of their mechanical-sync licenses as a generous charitable contribution to the project.

At first things went like a dream. Leigh approached David Byrne, Neneh Cherry, and the Thompson Twins, all of whom agreed to participate. I began to spend more and more time on the project, which became a *pro bono* client of my firm, while Leigh worked herself into the feverish pitch she managed to maintain for the next year and a half.

The most remarkable thing about the early stages of *Red Hot and Blue* was how knowledgeable the artists were about Cole Porter's music and how genuinely concerned they were about preventing AIDS and the stigma that surrounds it. Debbie Harry, who was eager to be part of the project, said, "I was devastated by the loss of some of my friends. I think that Robert Mapplethorpe took photography further in the fine arts than it had been before, and Keith Haring was this wonderful, wonderful artist. . . . The list goes on and on of those who have been taken from us and taken all this beauty with them. We should try hard to fight this disease and any kind of stigma that comes from sexual choice." Art Neville concurred: "*Red Hot and Blue* will provide a way to get a message across that AIDS is serious and not going to go away. It's going to be part of our lives for a long, long time. . . . We can be in love but we have to be aware to be safe and not take for granted that AIDS is not there because it is. I have a son and daughter, and they have to be aware of this stuff."

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm and concern of the artistic community was not universally echoed by the corporate culture that both supports and exploits it. Four months into the project, our first record label dropped us when its parent company belatedly informed the label that the company had a policy not to release charity records. Furthermore, the company told us it would no longer provide clearance for its artists who had agreed to participate. It took six months of negotiating and the help of the American Foundation for AIDS Research to convince the company to let us release their artists' tracks on another label.

We aggressively approached over 70 potential sponsors, to no avail. One of them told us bluntly that given the lineup it would immediately write us a check in the million-dollar range if the cause were related to some noncontroversial disease such as cerebral palsy. But for AIDS, the answer was no. Even a major British condom manufacturer, which

This page, from top: ***Red Hot and Blue*** **promotional poster; Cole Porter, Lisa Stansfield, Jody Watley.** *Opposite page, from top.* **a bewigged Sinéad; John Carlin and Leigh Blake; Roland Gift.**

we expected would be eager to help, said it felt its sponsorship would be "inappropriate." However difficult these setbacks were, they further confirmed our resolve.

Fortunately, we were able to secure the backing of another label, Chrysalis Records. Chrysalis not only provided recording and marketing costs, but did so on a basis whereby *all* profits from the sale of the record go to AIDS organizations around the world.

As the record was slowly being recorded by a variety of producers (notably Steve Lillywhite, who oversaw the process), Leigh and I began to build the video, film, and fashion concepts that we hoped would make *Red Hot and Blue* more than the sum of its parts. Leigh got the support of the two most exciting young designers around, Rifat Ozbek and Jean Paul Gaultier, who created mini-lines of *Red Hot and Blue* fashions. We also set up a line of T-shirts designed by leading visual artists whose work said something about the AIDS crisis.

Things on the film end did not run as smoothly. Just as with the record, artists were unbelievably helpful, supportive, and generous with their time. Matthew Rolston's comments were typical: "Everyone I know, including me, has lost people near and dear to us. . . . I'm touched on a daily basis hearing about people in the industry stricken by the disease. . . . The other thing that's very disturbing is this shift toward a radical right which involves a lot of bigotry, fear, and hate—which are things I hope a program like *Red Hot and Blue* will help to change for the better. What people have to realize is that AIDS is a human issue—it's not a gay, straight, black, white, or homeless issue. It can affect anybody, and it does. *It* could change life as we know it on the planet." Mark Pellington, cocreator of MTV's *Buzz* and director of the Jungle Brothers' film segment, expressed his interest more bluntly: "I want to contribute [the idea] that wearing a condom is cool; it's a badge of courage . . . a sign of virility, macho*ness*, because it shows you have your act together."

One of the most personally moving points in the project came one day in a London recording studio when Annie Lennox was singing along to the backing track of "Every Time We Say Goodbye." I looked over and saw her mother, a very prim and proper-looking woman, sitting there crying quietly in the corner, and there was Annie with her platinum hair and jeans. It was wonderful to see how AIDS had brought the two generations together.

The film program (at least the longer, non-ABC version) offered us the opportunity to provide more actual information about AIDS and to express the freedom of choice. As Steve McLain, who directed Jimmy Somerville in his provocative film segment for "From This Moment On," said: "Some people are using AIDS to push us back—not only gay men, but sexuality in general. It's important that we fight that and continue to talk about sexuality and not be pushed back into the closet or toward Victorian values." Or, as Somerville himself said, "Projects like *Red Hot and Blue* happen because there's not enough commitment from government and the social system to deal with the AIDS crisis—and it is a crisis."

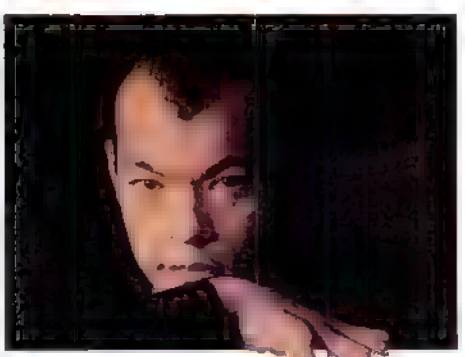
Cyril Neville echoed the sentiment even more concretely: "I was in St. Louis last year for the Fourth of July. After walking past these families homeless and hungry, I heard these gentlemen bragging they had spent a quarter-million dollars on their fireworks display. This is government by madmen who don't have an idea what reality is. They're making their own reality and making everyone else live it, and AIDS is just one other thing they've taken and used to separate people and keep people's mind off of what they are doing."

We aggressively approached over 70 potential sponsors to no avail. One of them told us bluntly that it would write us a check in the million-dollar range if the cause were related to some noncontroversial disease such as cerebral palsy. But for AIDS, the answer was no.

Unfortunately, just as we lost a record label midstream, our film production company placed itself in receivership at the moment we began to make our films. We had sold worldwide television and home-video rights and had lined up an amazing array of musicians, directors, and artists, yet the whole thing was about to go under.

Then an angel appeared in the form of the Palace Film Company. Palace's president, Nik Powell, picked up the project despite our having lost approximately $100,000 of the money we had raised for the budget in the receivership process.

The major problem thereafter was coordinating between ABC's demands for a Cole Porter-oriented entertainment show and our mandate to create an entertaining AIDS-awareness spectacle. The issue wasn't just the show's AIDS content—it also ran to aesthetics. ABC suggested an independent supervising producer of its own choice, Malcolm Leo, who effectively took the show from us in order to tailor it to ABC's needs. We wanted something very simple, but driven by art rather than celebrity. We had somehow made 18 short films over a period of four months that we felt expressed the often unrealized potential of music videos to effectively communicate important messages and to do so in a stunningly artistic manner.



We needed ABC both in terms of visibility in America, and, moreover, to keep our international cofinancing in place. But we were also afraid of what ABC was doing to our credibility. So we decided to edit two versions of the program. Americans got to see a shorter, softer show, while the rest of the world saw the longer, unedited version, which will be available in the U.S. on video this spring. Yet despite creative differences with ABC, the network, to its credit, was the only one willing to air *any* version of *Red Hot and Blue*.

What Would It Be Like To Hear...?

U2

singing

"Night and Day"

Sinead O'Connor

singing

"You Do Something To Me"

Neneh Cherry

singing

"I've Got You Under My Skin"

featuring new music from:

U2
Sinead O'Connor
Neneh Cherry
Jody Watley
Lisa Stansfield
Annie Lennox
David Byrne
Jungle Brothers
Neville Brothers
K.D. Lang
Fine Young Cannibals
Debbie Harry
Iggy Pop
Tom Waits
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Salif Keita
Les Negresses Vertes
The Thompson Twins
Kirsty MacColl
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Chrysalis

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Today's Artists Recreate Classic Cole Porter Songs

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Platter du Jour

3 MUSTAPHAS 3

Soup of the Century

Rykodisc

The 3 Mustaphas 3 are the Residents of non-Western popular music, right? After all, both groups (1) hide behind costumes, (2) make musical hash of orthodox song forms, and (3) seem loathe to reveal their identities. And by the way, have you ever seen both bands together in the same room?

But where the Residents fabricate ugly-beautiful theatrics for disaffected art nerds with peculiar facial hair, the Mustaphas do odd and zestful things with some of the world's greatest party music. The down-home pop sounds of India, Albania, Tex-Mexico, Mali, Okinawa, Spain, Bulgaria, and Arabia all become grist for the blithe musical stew ladled out on *Soup of the Century*.

According to Mustaphic legend, the group was smuggled out of the East European fiefdom of Szegerely in refrigerators; hence their onstage shout of "Take it to the fridge!" At the heart of the Mustaphas' sound are snaking Bulgarian melodies pitched forward on a danceable polka-style beat, with or without vocals sung in the Albanian, Turkish, or Serbo-Croatian languages. On *Soup*, the Mustaphas then garnish this basic salad with dub-worthy bass and drums, jazz saxophone, or a Chinese guitar solo (as on "Zohar No. 2"). More adventurous combinations include a country and western ode to a noodle cook, in Japanese ("Soba Song"); a Tex-Mex *conjunto* groove topped with an Indian *filmi* vocal sung in Hindi ("This City Is Very Exciting!"); and a Polish mazurka interrupted by thumping disco riffs ("Ti Citron").

Although perhaps not quite so musically ambitious as the group's *Local Music* (which features "L'Orchestra Bam de Grand Mustapha International and Party"), *Soup* carries the least-consciously kitschy kick of any Mustaphas disc yet. Lovingly detailed underneath the old-world melodies, its quirky breaks and phrasings (not to mention the heart-plucking sentimentality of singer Lavra Tima Daviz M's *madre*) make it perfectly clear that parody's the last thing on the band's collective open global mind.

Rumor has it that at least one of the Mustaphas is closely associated with England's GlobeStyle Records, the West's savviest purveyor of (relatively) exotic music. But where the GlobeStylers usually provide detailed background information for the music they release, the Mustaphas are blissfully afloat in the context of no context. Like good old-fashioned surrealism, none of this stuff actually means anything in the greater pop waveband. And couldn't your ears use a good vacation from *that* can of Spaghetti-Os?

Richard Gehr

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AC/DC

The Razors Edge

Atco

Am I getting old? *The Razors Edge* is AC/DC's, like, 63rd album and the ol' reliable Aussie bad-boy boogie is finally beginning to sound threadbare. It's not a question of technique—idiot savant blues guitarists Angus and Malcolm Young spark as reliably as a $200 auto battery, and new drummer Chris Slade (bald guy from the Firm) adds syncopation and a flair for stunt-playing that his predecessors (Phil Rudd and Simon Wright) lacked.

No, the problem here is inconsistent motivation. For half the album ("Got You by the Balls," etc.), writers Angus and Mal seem determined to repeat the same crude come-ons and A–D–G chord changes indefinitely. The more-awake tunes, however, include a cynical, poppish number, "Moneytalks," reminiscent of Bon Scott's era, and the squirming final track, "If You Dare," which is dulled only by its amazingly one-dimensional woman-get-over-here lyrics.

Tom Nordlie

DARYL HALL AND JOHN OATES

Change of Season

Arista

Being a Hall and Oates fan has its advantages. I found their last album, *Ooh Yeah*, marked down to $3.99 just months after its release, and now it seems their whole back catalogue is available on CD at $6.99 a pop. Posterity hasn't treated Daryl and John well, but posterity doesn't know what the fuck it's talking about. In any case, *Change of Season* is yet another masterpiece.

This time around on that comeback trail they've been hiking for most of a decade, Daryl and John have opted to go back to their "roots." That doesn't just mean lush '70s Philly soul, but also a folkie strain they haven't explored since 1973's *Abandoned Luncheonette*. Of course, most of the album still manages to be overproduced, especially the butchered single, "So Close." (To hear what a gorgeous song it really is, check out the acoustic version that ends the album.) But beneath the unnecessary synths and studio tricks, on *Change of Season* you can hear melodies few can match, and harmonies nobody's even attempted. Maybe by the year 2000, America will catch up to the good taste we had ten years ago.

Ted Friedman

THE CONNELLS

One Simple Word

TVT

Kissin' cousins with Southern luminaries like R.E.M. and Drivin' 'n' Cryin', the Connells grew up on the Mitch Easter/Don Dixon school of jangle and crunch-guitar pop. They have an affinity for giant hooks and strong melodies, and counterbalance their more pompous rockers with country stylings and twangy guitar pluckin'. This is fine. What's not so fine is the heavy melodrama they drown some of their tunes with—check out the drippy lyrics to "Another Souvenir," or the bloated deliv-

Little Sutty's Quest For Music

by Mark Blackwell

ery of "Speak to Me." Call them the Asia of alternative rock.

Thankfully, they don't always succumb to this mindset. They flex their muscles on poppy singles such as "Take a Bow" and the brisk, catchy "Stone Cold Yesterday," and also show a sense of humor, weaving in bits of Shannon's dance hit "Let the Music Play" on one tune. Perhaps most striking, though, is the acoustic, string- and wind-laden "Waiting My Turn." Songs like this suggest the Connells are capable of less-overblown joys.

Raymond Rogers

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Rubaiyat: Elektra's 40th Anniversary

Elektra

As an overall listening experience, *Rubaiyat: Elektra's 40th Anniversary* is sometimes annoying and more often funny. Nobody's going to like all 39 of these covers of old Elektra songs by current Elektra artists, but Michael Feinstein's cloying, string-dripping reading of Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" segueing straight into John Zorn's splatter of the Stooges' "TV Eye"?

There are lots of goofs here, from the affectionate American-pop spoofs of the Gipsy Kings Spanglish "Hotel California" and the Sugarcubes' pouty "Motorcycle Mama" by Sailcat, to Metallica's nitro-powered "Stone Cold Crazy" (by Queen) and a completely unrecognizable Billy Bragg bellowing a love song, and the Pixies' Black Francis calling from somewhere east of Des Moines in a bad electrical storm on a Paul Butterfield blues.

If anything, *Rubaiyat* reminds us how absurd the idea of a major label "identity" is. Trying to make sense out of this album is like trying to make sense out of the record industry. Leave it to the label's sole hip hop act,

the Native Tongue-styled Leaders of the New School, to put it all in perspective in "Mt. Airy Groove": "Elektra collects the buckets of ducats / Aah! I love it!"

Wif Stenger

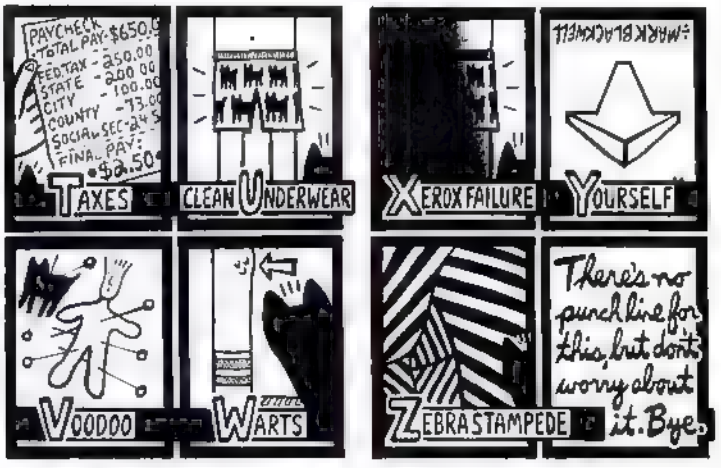
KINGHORSE

Kinghorse

Caroline

If you thought that most Kentucky bands sat on their porches and twanged on their acoustics . . . well, think again. Case in point. Kinghorse, a band from Louisville that mounts a full aural assault with its self-titled debut album. Check out the typically gory cover art by Pushead, and then strap yourself to a chair (or maybe a pole, if you like it standing up) and turn it up to 11.

Lead screamer Sean Garrison's



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"Hey, who is this guy doing this great stuff?"
—David Byrne

voice gets under your skin and makes you squirm, while the rest of the quartet (Mark Abromavage, guitar, Kevin Brownstein, drums; and Mike Bucayu, bass) provides a suitably thrashy maelstrom, captured well by producer Glenn Danzig. Lyrically, these boys come off like Manson-loving weirdos: Witness "Motherfucker, open this cage / Maybe then I'll leave this bitch in one piece" on "Caged." Check it out, this ain't no one-trick pony.

Lauren Spencer

BIG DADDY KANE

Taste of Chocolate
Cold Chillin'/Warner Bros.

A few years ago, the only question about Big Daddy Kane was how big a star he was going to be. He's got so many words that he writes rhymes for everyone on his label, but he's never found a cut to break him out of the pack. Having a stalled career makes a man do foolish things, like "All of Me," the duet with Barry White that begins *Taste of Chocolate*'s second side. White's basso remains profundo—unfortunately, the song's nonexistent and Kane's pathetically lost.

When not trying to become a love god, the Kane can still swing a line and drop brand names from Craftmatic to Chef Boyardee. He's valuably voluble, but he's losing his edge. If he's not careful, soon the only question about Big Daddy Kane will be whether you file his albums under B or K in your collection.

Gavin Edwards

THE CHARLATANS UK

Some Friendly
Beggars Banquet

England's latest groove masters, the Charlatans UK, have been compared time and time again to the Stone Roses. Sure, there are similarities. Both bands float on gently lapping waves of sound, blending light, iridescent instrumentation and heavy-lidded vocals with loose hypnotic dance beats. But while the Stone Roses often lose themselves amid swirls of psychedelia, the Charlatans UK have their feet firmly planted on the ground.

Their debut release, *Some Friendly*, is lush and warm, teeming with spinning rhythms and soothing melodies. Much of the music is rooted in the '60s—the soaring harmonies owe more than a bit to the Byrds. But the songs are hardly throwback rip-offs. "The Only One I Know" is a feast of sleepy vocals and radiant, original hooks. "Polar Bear" is bouncy and syncopated, a sure dance-floor hit. No doubt about it. The Charlatans UK are for real.

Jon Wiederhorn

THE CURE

Mixed Up
Elektra

Split between the good, the bad, and the cheesy, *Mixed Up* should introduce new Cure converts to the olden days, when the group played for this nation's masses of iconoclasts. It's dance remixes, mostly unreleased, plus the new "Never Enough," a good rocker. Although the Cure never exactly gets the funk, the *Disintegration* remixes successfully reintegrate that album's singles around the rhythm section. "Pictures of You" may not have needed a reggae bass line, but it's fun.

However, the Cure's older, more tightly arranged songs (like "In Between Days") go in reverse, diluted until there's nothing left. Although this album follows the lead of Bobby Brown and Milli Vanilli, comrades in the American Top Ten, maybe the Cure would be more comfortable competing on the basis of coolest haircut.

Gavin Edwards

THE VAUGHAN BROTHERS

Family Style
Epic

Family Style wasn't supposed to be Stevie Ray Vaughan's parting shot, especially since it sounds more like Jimmie Vaughan's album. But until the release of a posthumous best-of, *Family Style* is what we're left with, and it's perhaps fitting that

Stevie went out with this long-awaited collaboration under his belt.

More super session knockoff than cutting contest, *Family Style* definitely lives up to its title. While one suspects that some hostility (or at least tension) might have enlivened the proceedings a bit, the Vaughans' obvious affection and respect for each other's ability gives the album a warm, comfortable feel. Fans of loud'n'fast Stevie's rave-on numbers will be disappointed that there's only one such song here ("Long Way From Home"), but more of this nature would have been inappropriate—*Family Style* is more about grooves than flash.

With its warning that "time's ticking away," the Curtis Mayfield-style soul ballad, "Tick Tock," is the song most people have picked up on as Stevie's unwitting epitaph. A better one is actually the album-closing "Brothers," an easy-going shuffle that features the Vaughans passing the same guitar back and forth between solos, with singer Brenda White-King playing the harried mother: "Turn that down / Don't do that / Now y'all share."

That's a great image—the two brothers in their element, casually handing a guitar back and forth with the tape rolling, unaware that this would be one of the last times they would play together. Maybe *Family Style* makes a pretty good epitaph after all.

David Menconi

CINDERELLA

Heartbreak Station

PolyGram

You know those annoying forty-something rock critics who insist no one's come up with any really good music for the last 20 years? Cinderella front man Tom Keifer not only agrees with them, but, weirdly enough, proves them right. He just loves that good ol' stuff, and that love carries Cinderella out of the pop-metal ghetto where the band first made it big. So forget the glammed-out cover of Cinderella's 1986 debut, *Night Songs*, okay? They've changed.

Most hard-rock arena bands place a premium on the roles of metal god, party animal, and sex machine; their biggest influence is the last band of their genre that went multiplatinum. Cinderella is more interested in evolving as a group of musicians and rock historians. The band pays homage to *all* the objects of its sonic affection here and manages to make it sound both authentic and original.

There are also enough AC/DC-esque rave-ups to keep the band's original teen-scream audience satisfied, but Cinderella has largely left that circuit in the dust. It's all in the nuances. Keifer owns around 60 vintage guitars, knows the tiny aural differences between all of them, and puts them to good use. Same thing with the minute contrasts in sound in various studios. *Heartbreak Station* was recorded all over the country, from Philly to Bogalusa, Louisiana; its guest stars include the Memphis Horns and Led Zep's John Paul Jones, who arranged the live strings. (Cinderella doesn't cater to synthesizers, either.)

With this, by far the band's best disc, Cinderella's on its way to becoming a classic band in the best sense: one of universal appeal—without resorting to clichés. When Keifer sings "She took the la-a-a-st train outta my heart" on the title track, or takes that jangly, graceful turn on slide guitar on "Dead Man's Road," you know it's gonna sound just as cool on some oldies station 20 years from now. (Just like that stuff from the '60s.)

Daina Darzin

GIBSON BROTHERS/ WORKDOGS

Punk Rock Truck Drivin' Song of a Gun

Homestead

On their third LP, the Gibson Brothers (joined by two friends) continue to have fun trashing old standards and making up new trash. Well-worn tatters of Americana—the

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The air is electrified with thunderous applause as the bass starts to thump out a sweet soul intro. The backup singers fall into place with perfectly synchronized steps and gestures as the spotlight leads every eye to the microphone.

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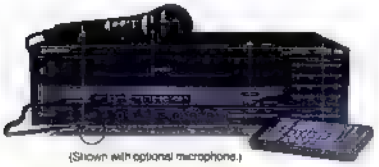

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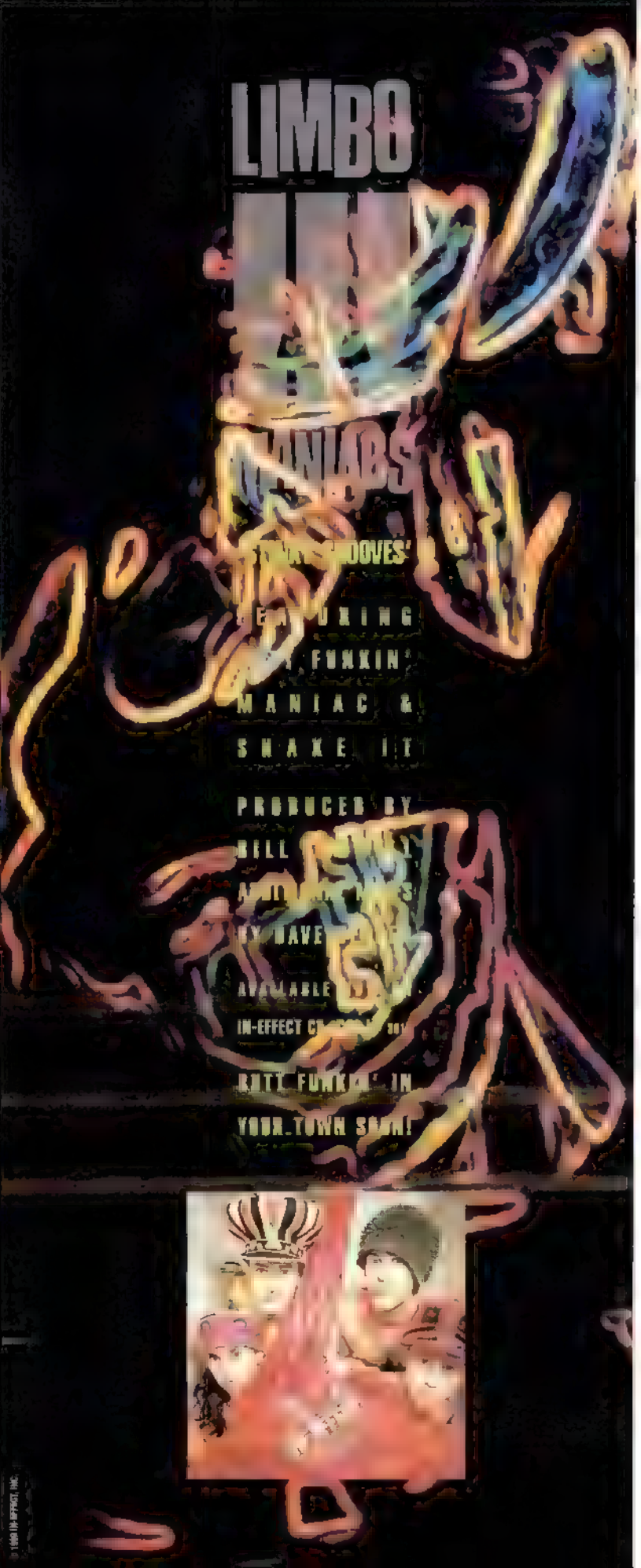


rodeo, imitation Jerry Lee Lewis yelps, venereal disease—are treated with disrespect.

This record's centerpiece is "Giddy-up Go," an extended rant recited, in part, by a quadriplegic truck driver over his CB. The fine blues rumble continues monotonously in the background as the earnest narrator praises those "down-to-earth, pill-poppin' " truckers with open enough minds to appreciate punk rock music. The punk rock he's talking about is the kind nobody needed to invent in Manhattan or London: It's been bubbling up from rural cesspools of the U.S. forever.

Ivan Kreilkamp

PREFAB SPROUT

Jordan: The Comeback

Kitchenware/Epic

Though it features 19 tracks that vary in sound, style, and tempo, I hesitate calling *Jordan: The Comeback* eclectic. There's too much symmetry and consistency here—courtesy of Paddy McAloon's ability to focus on precise subjects (Abba, God, and Elvis) and then filter them through the pop gamut.

Jordan kicks off with instant hit material like "Looking for Atlantis" and "We Let the Stars Go," but the record's substance is more profound. If you can stomach hearing someone tell you, "Hi, this is God here," complete with a wandering melody line that Steely Dan could've penned—or *two* songs with Jesse James as a counterpoint—you'll reap the benefits of your patience, because it's the ridiculous moments here that lend the record durability. Dare I say it? A complex, major work.

Rob O'Connor

POGUES

Hell's Ditch

Island

If James Joyce assembled a pub chorus from atop a barstool, it would be the Pogues. Led by Shane MacGowan's gruff, offhanded vocals—he sucked the hops dry and then chewed 'em—the band rocks with penny whistles, banjos, and concertinas. Because these guys have a better, more interesting band than most, their flaws tend to be enhanced, turning *Hell's Ditch* into drunken lovers that have found their way to bed but fall asleep before the act on.

Hell's Ditch boasts some of the band's best songs yet, including a couple of touristy nods to the Orient, "Sayonara" and "Summer in Siam," a hilarious duet between MacGowan's vocals and a fluttering piano. The dark "Lorca's Novena," which does not succumb to a bad mix, is given a gallows feel by a rolling snare drum enhanced with a wafting, ghostly vocal. Bells toll during the vamp, and barely understood phrases like "Blew his brains out with a pistol" linger. But the fun is always nearby, brimming with downright contagiousness on "The Sunny Side of the Street." So like that drunken couple, even as the band disappointedly awakens, fully clothed, memories of the party before still bring smiles.

Robert Gordon

INDIGO GIRLS

Nomads Indians Saints

Epic

The Indigo Girls must really piss Dan Fogelberg off. Here he can't even get arrested anymore, while the Indigos sell records by the truckload with his same ol' schtick: music that's politely folksy, modest even, counterpointed by pompous lyrics and annoying levels of sensitivity.

But the fact that Amy Ray and Emily Saliers don't have anything to say doesn't stop them from littering *Nomads Indians Saints* with strident Big Statements that are about as profound as, say, Edie Brickell: references to Narcissus, death, God, Satan, cities of angels, 10,000 wars, the weight of the world, and a curious desire to be a nomad, Indian, or saint. "I've been digging too deep," they sing on the album-opening "Hammer and a Nail," "I always do." Right.

Despite their tedious earnestness, the Indigos *do* have some pretty fabulous two-part vocal harmonies. Ray's and Saliers's voices fit together perfectly, and their harmonized voices almost always sound spectacular. Now if only they'd content themselves with covering someone else's songs. Next album, how about *The Indigo Girls Sing Leonard Cohen?*

David Menconi

ROSANNE CASH

Interiors

Columbia

Rosanne Cash wasn't kidding when she called this one *Interiors*. With the exception of "This World" (which is about child abuse, among other things, and somewhat

clichéd), the songs are stark and intensely personal. So personal that, armed with knowledge of Ms. Cash's past personal upheavals (gleaned from gossip rags), you start reading things into the lyrics, with the distinct sensation that you are eavesdropping. Filled with a heartache that goes way beyond your stereotypical tear-in-my-beer stuff, this is hardcore, grown-up, something-has-died, it's-too-late-to-turn-back-now shit.

Often accompanied only by piano and the hint of strings, Rosanne's voice teeters on the edge of dissolution. Its soft-spoken insistence drags you in, makes you listen, and leaves you drained. This is not an easy disc. Song titles such as "I Need a Cure," "Land of Nightmares," and "On the Surface" leave you amply warned. Yet through all the darkness, Rosanne shines, and though you're left depleted, there's a hint of light off in the distance. *Interiors* is a work of quiet, painful beauty.

Amy Linden

MONIE LOVE

Down to Earth

Warner Bros.

Let's just cut to the chase on this one: *Down to Earth* is okay. Not great, not bad—just a firm okay. With all the hype, and with Monie's previous track record, including her toe-to-toe duet with Queen Latifah on "Ladies First," okay is less than you'd expect. The problem isn't in the sound of the record or in what she has to say. Monie touches on all the politically correct '90s positivity riffs—her protagonists leave the scum-bag men rather than staying around. She's a single mom who is handling all the pressure; she avoids pork; she's aware of all the social ills one should be aware of; she doesn't seem to take herself too seriously. The problem is that Monie sounds so bored, so uninvolved with what she is saying. There's little or no fire in her delivery. Whether it's dissing men or pigs, she gives it the same amount of oomph.

When she lets it rip (as on "Just Don't Give a Damn" and "Detrimentally Stable"), Monie is convincing. But those moments and a few others are the exceptions. Monie often lapses into cliché or repeats herself from song to song. "Don't Funk Wid the Mo" is a way-too-long monologue about how Monie broke into the biz—nice story, but it goes on and on until you really don't care. To be honest, I expected something a little tougher and less high school like than "Monie in the Middle" or "R U Single." If there were some way to edit this sucker down, trim each number by at least a minute, toss out the boy-crazy nonsense, and let more of Monie's obvious smarts and once-

apparent style blast through, then *Down to Earth* might have been more than okay.

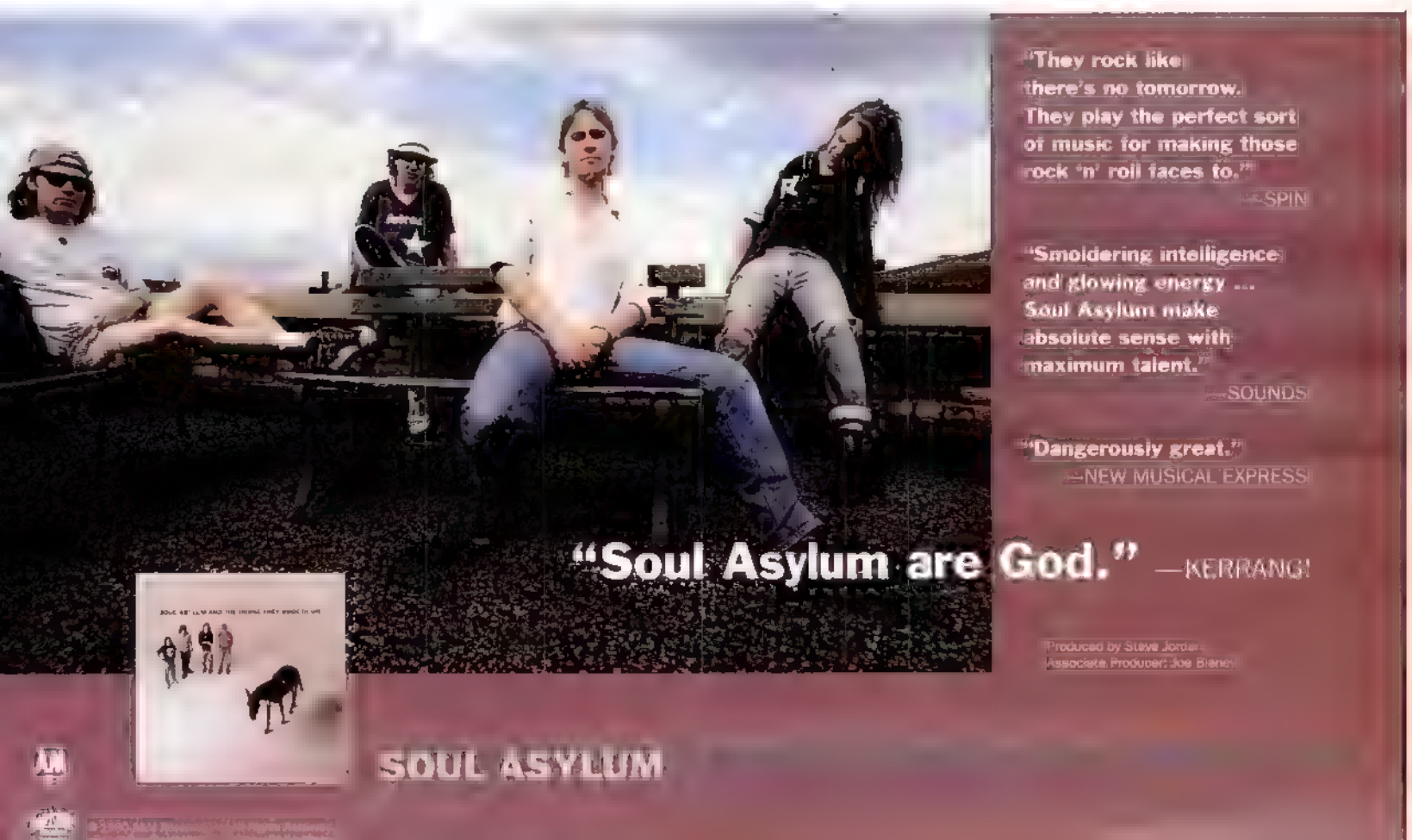
Amy Linden

KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION

Love Is Hell

One Little Indian/Rough Trade

The Kitchens of Distinction balance their haunting pop songs with equal doses of melody and swells of conflicting emotions—hope, fear, pain, and pleasure. Echoes of the Bunnymen, Smiths, and Cocteaus resonate loudly, but not so clearly, in the mix of super-clean bass lines and spacey, restrained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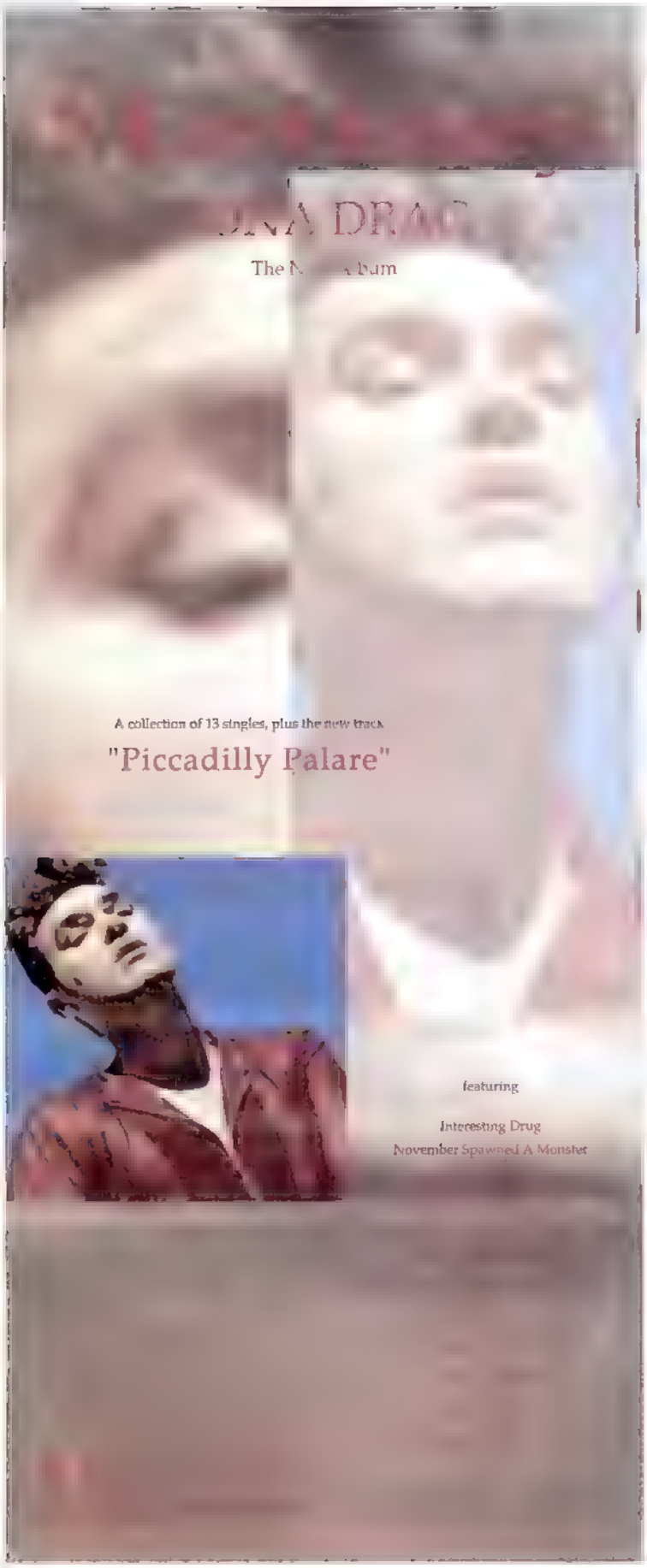

feedback.

The Kitchens' openly gay singer, Patrick Fitzgerald, tackles weighty topics such as life, sex, and love (oh yeah, and killing Margaret Thatcher), with a keen eye for the many ironies in life. He puts an interesting spin on everyday themes like nature's woes ("Elephantine") or plain ol' man-to-man pub talk ("Prize"). And the intimate details he shares when singing about the very real threat of AIDS in "Hammer", for instance, leave the listener frightened and devastated.

Where more ambiguous artists openly stress the virtues of diversity and listening with open minds, the Kitchens spell it out point blank, printing Silence Equals Death right on their disc and sticking naked men on its cover. They also brew up some of the most sincere and gorgeously twisted pop music around. Listen up.

Raymond Rogers

FIRE IN THE KITCHEN

The Theory of Everything

Behemoth

Fire in the Kitchen doesn't fit into anyone's current idea of what "alternative music" should sound like. I respect that; the band's own ideas are good enough. At first listen, Fire in the Kitchen's songs seem to have more guitar leads than any current nonmetal band, but it's often just rhythm guitar pushed up to the front. Sometimes one guitarist will play a quiet jangle while the other grinds away at chords, or both will trade short leads. Guitarist Bob Bannister's degree in music theory is reflected in his playing, but unlike almost every fool with chops, he doesn't make a big deal out of it.

Apart from the nifty guitar interplay, Fire in the Kitchen's songs are also good pop songs in the vein of Big Star or the Raspberries. The band's lyrics are too often about disillusionment ("Showboat," "MacDeth") or decaying relationships ("It Always Does," "Whole Lotta Love") to come off innocent, like those two bands did. But the general tone is relatively calm and clearheaded.

In 1990, "alternative music" is just a marketing slot or, at best, another genre like heavy metal or hip hop with its own mainstream and underground. Fire in the Kitchen doesn't seem to be setting itself up as an alternative to anything. *The Theory of Everything* isn't perfect, but it's closer than 95 percent of the albums released so far into this decade.

Steve Erickson

BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL

Led Zeppelin

BY JON YOUNG

BIG RIFFS BIG HYPE big tours, big bucks. . . . Everything Led Zeppelin did took on absurd, oversized dimensions. So it figures that the band's self-titled boxed set continues its larger-than-life tradition. At 54 cuts, totaling almost 6 heavy hours, this obviously isn't the greatest hits collection the band never designed to release. Nor is it a good compilation of highlights—in stuffing well over half of Zep's studio tracks into these four CDs, producer Jimmy Page has gathered up a lot of rubbish to go with the gems. So what is this giant *thing* (apart from a jump aboard the boxed set bandwagon for a few more truckloads of cash)?

Like most of Led Zeppelin's music, it's a grand gesture with no deeper message beyond the desire to be huge. When the band emerged in 1969, Page, Robert Plant, John Bonham, and John Paul Jones presumed to operate on the glorious scale of no less than Elvis Presley, shaping their sound with broad strokes. But things weren't as simple as they'd been in 1954. Though steeped in the brilliance of the King and the majesty of the blues, Zep also drew on Indian and Arabic strains, dared to play acoustic folk, tossed in precious hippie sensibilities, and acknowledged the legacy of psychedelia, without lapsing into its baroque excesses—not very often, anyway (see "Friends"). So "Stairway to Heaven" came out nothing like "Jailhouse Rock," although the universality of its appeal was comparable.

If you've somehow avoided the radio overkill, "Stairway" still packs a wallop, being a masterpiece of dynamic tension that gives off thrilling sparks every time it shifts gears

Other songs have also retained their luster, especially the brooding "Kashmir" eight epic minutes of Middle Eastern grace, "D'yer Mak'er," a reggae ska workout, "Communication Breakdown," at the frantic, tuneful energy of early punk nearly a decade before the fact, and "Black Dog," with its bruising, dumb beat.

"Black Dog" and "Rock and Roll" among many others, epitomized Zeppelin's knack for being stupid and wonderful at once, a talent displayed in most great rock'n'roll of the pre-Beatles era when folks didn't take themselves too seriously. After all, any band "blessed" with Plant's cat-in-heat vocals, not to mention his generally lame lyric writing, should have known better than to put on airs. (The boys were plenty pretentious when circumstances dictated, of course.) Although legions of imitators, not to mention the man's own charm and staying power, have legitimized his style, there was a time when Plant's cartoon performances seemed merely silly.

On the other hand, there was never any doubt about the brilliance of Bonham and Page. Arguably the greatest drummer ever to attack a rock'n'roll kit, John Bonham could thrash a song endlessly without damaging it. His beefy licks make the 11-minute blues of "In My Time of Dying" speed by like a brisk aerobics session. As for Jimmy Page, breathtaking axe work was perhaps the least important of his strengths. The simple catchy riffs he crafted for "Dancing Days" and "Whole Lotta Love" are works of genius rooted in the familiar, yet remain remarkably fresh. Best of all, he was a genuinely great producer, bringing deft, sophisticated touches to the crummiest material. Constantly adding depth and texture, Page created the illusion that each guitar, drum and vocal layer came from a different place in the room.

The punched-up for-CD sound, intended to highlight every brawny nuance, is the best reason to invest in *Led Zeppelin: The Miniseries*. Lord knows you shouldn't shell out just for the three "new" tracks: two lively if unessential BBC takes from 1969 plus an unremarkable B-side. Yes, the sound is better, though these ears failed to detect dramatic improvements during a random spot comparison with the original, oft-disparaged album CDs. Perhaps that's because Jimmy wisely left in some tape hiss, knowing a shot of grunge has more sizzle than a scrubbed, antiseptic approach. It's too bad Page couldn't unearth more unreleased stuff, even alternate takes or unfinished material. Nothing could be less satisfying than ten minutes of Achilles' Last Stand," a simultaneously abrasive and boring ordeal.

Consuming this mega-chunk of Zeppelin almost in one bite has prompted a few other fevered observations.

(a) Showing good judgment, Page included nothing from *The Song Remains the Same*, the superfluous live soundtrack to the band's amazingly dull 1976 film.

(b) "Candy Store Rock" starts out as a fabulous update of Presley's "Baby, Let's Play House," but Zep botches the follow-through.

(c) The late, great Sandy Denny should have been credited for her fiery duet with Plant on "The Battle of Evermore."

(d) Sometimes criticized (and sued) for not having acknowledged sources, Zep does list long-dead blues greats Memphis Minnie and Robert Johnson as collaborators, which inspires odd fantasies of Page sitting down with Johnson to write "Traveling Riverside Blues."

(e) Call 'em interpreters or thieves, but you've got to like a band whose

Nobody's Fault but Mine."

(f) Page left off two of my faves, "Good Times Bad Times," pumped up power pop, and "The Crunge," a hilarious James Brown salute.

(g) Of all the major bands in rock history, Led Zeppelin probably had the least to say.

(h) This could've been trimmed down to an awesome two-CD set.

(i) You're sure to find foreshadowings of your current favorite band in here somewhere.

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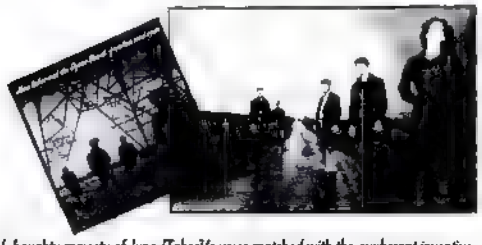

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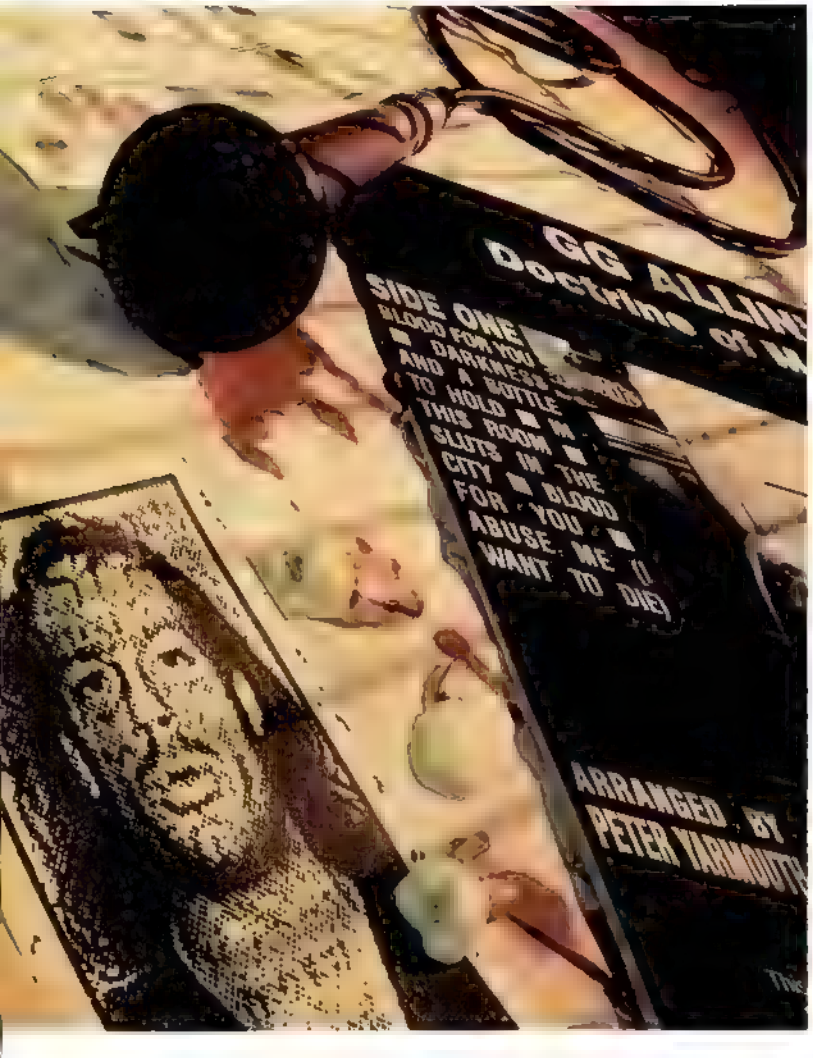

G.G. ALLIN

G.G. Allin considers himself a "living, breathing, death-defying rock'n'roll terrorist."

But even if he's just a living, breathing pathological clown, does he belong in jail?

BY JIM GREER

AS SOON AS I GET out of here," says G.G. Allin, "I'm going back to the mission."

The mission for Allin is either to die in tragedy or in low comedy, depending on your perspective. The man who considers himself the King of the Underground is in a Michigan jail and has been for the last year He's there on charges of assault and battery, but the way he sees it, he's there for his rock'n'roll.

"When I went for my parole hearing, the first thing the woman said to me was, 'Mr. Allin, you're a performer for all the wrong reasons,' " he recounted recently on the fourth day of a hunger strike he had begun, to protest what he felt was unjust treatment at the hands of the Michigan Department of Corrections. (He ended his strike on the eighth day after receiving a letter from his sentencing judge promising to look into his case.) "Now that doesn't make any sense to me," Allin says. "I wasn't put in here on a performance-related charge, and whether they approve of my performing or not shouldn't have anything to do with being granted parole I've done my time."

For those unfamiliar with G.G. Allin's oeuvre, a brief description may be in order. In the course of any given performance, G.G. may knock some of his teeth out with the microphone, bloody his head hitting himself with the microphone, masturbate onstage, beat up spectators, defecate onstage, and get beaten up by spectators. His performances resemble less rock'n'roll, as commonly understood, than trench warfare "My audience is my enemy," he says. Music is secondary in a G G. Allin performance to violence, as he will be the first to tell you. "I use my mind as a machine gun and my body as the bullets—and the audience as a target."

Only half of what G.G. says is complete self-promotional bullshit—which doesn't make it any less scary, apparently. At least to his fans, this is part of the attraction. Where many so-called underground bands flirt with an aura of self-destruction or danger, most consider drinking a six-pack of Budweiser the height of rock'n'roll decadence. Allin is one of the few who actually lives what he sings

Which is, admittedly, a dubious honor. I mean, you wouldn't actually want to admit that you'd lived a life consisting of "Sleeping in My Piss," "Needle Up My Cock," and "Abuse Me (I Want to Die)." Would you?

G.G. does. "I'm not out there for shock value," he says "You can look at it as shock value—I look at it as reality. It's my life. I'm not proud of it, but it's the way I live."

None of this, except indirectly, has anything to do with why Allin is now serving time It's a complicated story. Seems that for the last couple of years G.G. had been corresponding with John Hinckley, the man who unsuccessfully tried to off President Reagan. Seems that in his letters he wrote things like "Too bad you missed, man" and "What kind of gun did you use?" and "When you get out I'll help you try again." This came to the attention of the Secret Service, which spent some time trying to track G G down. When it caught up with him in Illinois, they discovered some outstanding warrants for his arrest in Michigan.

The warrants related to an incident or series of incidents involving a girl he'd met at a gig in Ann Arbor. She was charging G G. with assault and battery stemming from a brief relationship following the gig. During the course of this two-week "orgy, or whatever," as G G. characterizes it, things apparently got somewhat out of hand.

"Everything that happened was consensual," maintains Allin. "Like, she said, 'Why don't you take my

CHRIS GALLO

knife and give me a tattoo?' And I said, 'I don't have any ink, so I'll just carve into you,' and she said, 'Okay,' and I did, and I got enough blood, and drank her blood, whatever. It was just one of those things that she wanted to happen. I mean, two weeks later she asked me to marry her."

Regardless of why the woman in question then changed her mind and decided to file charges (G.G. thinks the Secret Service put her up to it), he's served a year in jail for his crime and is eligible for parole. And despite the fact that he claims to have been a model prisoner, the parole board doesn't seem to want to let him go. [At press time, a spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Corrections would say only that a decision on Allin's parole is still pending.]

As a result, Allin has filed a civil suit against the State of Michigan Corrections Department and the State of Michigan Parole Board, claiming that he has been discriminated against because of his reputation as a performer. The suit asks for $3 million in damages.

"The 2 Live Crew thing seems safe to me," says Allin. "I don't know what those guys are complaining about. I'm actually doing what those guys only talk about. I'm being kept in jail for my rock'n'roll."

G.G. doesn't really care about the lawsuit. He just wants to get out of jail, to get back to the mission. "To me, comfort and conformity are the two biggest enemies," he says. "I want to die in tragedy. That really excites me. I've lived a lot of years in a short period of time. I've got no intention of living out a stupid, boring, unchallenging life. I want to go down in flames. I mean, why not?"

UNDERGROUND HIT LIST

Nikki Sudden and the French Revolution, *Groove* (Rockville)
Laughing Hyenas, *Life of Crime* (Touch & Go)
No Man, *Whamon Express* (SST)
Chrome, *Alien Soundtracks* (Touch & Go, reissue); *Half Machine Lip Moves* (Touch & Go, reissue)

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BY JAMES BERNARD

SINGLES

Hip Hop West Coast Roundup

THE SAME IMPULSE that drives little-known musicians into their garages with cheap amps and bargain-rate guitars inspires others to sweat over drum machines and carefully written rhymes scribbled in dime-store notebooks. The San Francisco Bay Area alone boasts well over 200 unsigned rap groups, more than a few of which kick with a vengeance.

Many self-proclaimed hip hop veterans dis Cali as the Land of Hammer and refuse to look closer. Well, here's just a sampling of the West Coast posses that deserve more juice.

Although Oakland's **Too Short** sells records in abundance, he's rarely heard on the nation's airwaves—which probably bothers me more than it bothers him. He's famous for "stroking the male ego," as he calls his thin (but profitable) woman-baiting routine, but "**The Ghetto**" (Jive) reveals the true depth of his talent. Over a generous

Movement X: talkin' 'bout a revolution.

sample of Donny Hathaway's 1970 hit—which gives Too Short more melody than his usual back-to-basics, jeep-thumpin' sound—the rapper paints a loving, intimate portrait of his old neighborhood; the close-knit support, but also the utter desperation to survive: "Even though my sister smoked crack cocaine / She was nine months pregnant and nothing changed / Six hundred million on a football team / And her baby died like a dope fiend / The story I tell is incomplete / Five kids in the house and no food to eat." The track features an inspiring (sampled) cameo by the Last Poets.

San Francisco's **Paris** is jumpin' out the box with "**The Devil Made Me Do It**" (Tommy Boy), his debut LP's title track. Calling himself the Black Panther of Hip Hop, he sounds a little like Rakim at half-speed—which is to say, even more menacing than the original. If you heard "**Break the Grip of Shame**" over the summer, you know what I mean: Paris's cool vocals are an exciting contrast to the steamrollin' bass line dominating both singles. "Devil" admonishes you to "Build your brain and we'll soon make progress," while the mix, less bouncy than "Shame," moves the crowd. Also from San Francisco, **Dangerous Dame** got signed on Atlantic after many years of kickin' around the local scene. His new single, "**I Call Your Name**," is an enthusiastic power ballad, but the B side wins with "**The Powers That Be**," an antidrug, pro-education, antiviolence, pro-safe-sex ("[Protection] ain't nothing but a 20-second process"), pro-rap voyage through Parliament-esque funk.

The **Uzi Brothers** recently left San Francisco for L.A. and landed themselves on the *Return of Superfly* soundtrack with "**There's a Riot Jumpin' Off**," which does the heavy-duty James Brown thang. Their single "**From Cell Block No. 9**" (Original Sound Entertainment), serves up street knowledge without a lot of cursing. On "**Freedom Got a Shotgun**," L.A.'s **Movement Ex** takes us on a rough tour along the (armed) revolution's front line. Reminiscent of Dr. Dre's ass-kicking sound, this song marches, stomps, twists, and turns with alarming speed. No pacemakers, please. Extra points for the *Newsweek* dis. If this single is any warning, the revolution will be undeniably funky.

Nikki D recently became the Queen of Def Jam—the first woman rapper signed to this pioneering hip hop label. "**Lettin' Off Steam**" kicks with a vengeance—refusing to be dragged down by the same sample that nagged Professor Griff's otherwise strong "Pawns in the Game" or by Flavor Flav's annoying guest appearance. So far, so good.

Priority Records never fails to deliver adrenalin-pumpin' artists—Ice Cube, N.W.A, and Low Profile to name a few. L.A.'s **KMC** is no exception. Whoever called these guys the Stephen Kings of rap obviously hasn't heard the Geto Boys, but "**2 N 1**" chills your spine (and moves your behind) with a furious hard-core (not pop) Rick James sample. Hammer take note (and take notes).

Oakland's **Mhisani** (Timbuktu Creations) updates Run-D.M.C.'s "My Adidas" groove, adding a few well-placed bass bombs and plenty of cowbells on his "**Y.O.U.T.H.**" (Young Oakland Unemployed Teenage Hustlers), while vividly schooling us on how some young folk get by in the East Bay. Slammin'.

Big League Records, again out of Oaktown, gets the Gold Drum Machine Award for productivity with three serious albums out: **415**'s *4-1-Fivin'* and the solo work from two of its members, Richie Rich's *Don't Do It*, and D-Loc's *Split Personality*. You see, the street buzz here is built around albums rather than singles because we lack good hip hop radio and club action out here (and besides, it's clumsy to change singles while rollin' in your jeep). Nonetheless, 415's single "**Groupie**," a not-so-affectionate ode to overzealous female fans over a sample of the Commodores' "Brick House," gets played on radio—or at least the "clean" version does.

The volcanic activity of today's rap scene is in full flow, and much of the action takes place far from the radio, record companies, or *Yo! MTV Raps!* **Nefertiti** is a 17-year-old woman from L.A. with a demo called "**Silent Mecca Revolution**" and an incredible stage presence to match. And three Bay Area groups—**Freedom TROOP 187, Heart & Soul,** and **Def Court**—have jammin' demos full of clever vocals and furious, funky beats. These groups are unsigned, and that's a damn shame. But that'll change as rap fans discover there's a blast of creativity 3,000 miles west of Manhattan.

Nikki D: the first woman to let off steam on Def Jam.

WILLIAM BECKMAN (LEFT) JOE GRANT (RIGHT)

Zbigniew Holdys

continued from page 66

in the public schools.

Young people are pushing back. A crowd of 5,000 young people marched on the residence of the Archbishop of Warsaw and pelted the old buzzard's house with condoms.

NEXT TIME I see Zbiggy, he is rocking New York's Limelight disco. The club is housed in what used to be a church. Behind Zbiggy is a huge stained-glass window; above him, huge gold crowns hang from the rafters. In Poland, the setting might be blasphemous. In New York, it's just another gimmick.

Zbiggy, who used to be so anti-Communist he wouldn't let his bass player go on stage wearing a red T-shirt, is now himself wearing a Soviet army cap and a red T-shirt with a hammer and sickle on it. On a high-speed rampage called "Just Another Day," it comes to me. Perfect is Eastern Europe's answer to Living Colour.

After the show, Zbiggy is helpfully carrying a fold-up table out of the dressing room. He says he thinks the crowd and the show were too nostalgic for the days of martial law. He prefers to talk about what is going on in Poland today. He criticizes Lech Walesa, the leader of Solidarity, and even the church.

"The older generation [in Poland]," he says, "does not see the border between them and the younger generation which has a different future." But Zbiggy insists that he is now a follower, not a leader. "Any political creation by people my age in Poland will be manipulation. Maybe the new generation will need advisers and I will be glad to help them, but the young people must take the power themselves."

Outside the dressing room, the DJ is cranking the disco. The Chinese girls are shaking it, even the Poles are getting funky. The rock'n'roll legend of the East has been quickly forgotten, even by his countrymen.

Zbiggy doesn't seem disappointed, only determined. He's been listening to rap and thinking about how to incorporate rap into his rock. He's patient. He played the dives of Gdansk and the student clubs of Wroclaw. He gagged on tear gas and sold millions of albums. He compromised himself, outlasted the Communists, told Solidarity to fuck off, and lit out for the bright lights of the West. He'll rock another day; another town. Zbiggy has met his new boss: the show-biz monster.

Danzig

continued from page 30

Rubin.

"The problem with Danzig, if anyone has one, is that the image isn't far from the person," he says. "It's a very scary thing. When I see films and videos of us I laugh because I guess I *am* kind of scary. It's weird. I don't try to analyze it, but when I sit down and think about it, I think, yeah, very dangerous, very violent, very . . "

The scene drifts back to the previous night when Glenn was searching for the ultimate titty bar. He didn't find even a bad titty bar. Just miles of corporate headquarters, fast food joints, and shopping malls. His search led him instead to an Osco drugstore where he took refuge in the video section and found *This Is Elvis*. As he was standing in line at the cash register a tabloid headline snagged him.

"Finally—Proof That Satan Exists," it read. "Never Before Seen. Photo of Devil Leaving Victim's Body During Exorcism Ritual!"

And Glenn laughed, knowing that the true evil in this world was the killing sameness surrounding him in the supermarket, and the headlines of fear that force the population to seek refuge in these safe, sterile worlds. Glenn was still laughing outside the supermarket as he walked past a green dumpster filled with Halloween pumpkins for the kiddies and let go with his elbow into one of the jack-o'-lanterns waiting to be adopted. *Whhhhompffff!*

His laugh got even meaner and filled the half-empty parking lot, causing young mothers to clutch their kids, and old men with six-packs under their arms to lock their car doors and drive away. If America shakes in its boots over a faked picture in the *Weekly World News*, Geraldo's tales of devils in high places, and backward masking on Judas Priest's records . . . well it hasn't seen anything yet. And Glenn Danzig's eyes burn with an evil delight; he knows he is just the guy to show 'em the true meaning of terror.

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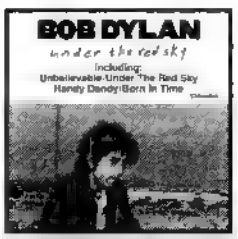

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Paul Simon/Hank Shocklee

continued from page 61

ain't a tree tomorrow, throw away the roots, pot, dirt, and everything.

SIMON: It was the same thing with rock'n'roll. They said, This is dumb music for 15-year-olds, with stupid lyrics that don't mean anything. Then that generation grows up, starts to be creative, and expresses itself on a mature level.

SHOCKLEE: When I first heard the Beatles on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, it was probably the most incredible performance I had ever seen on television. Every adult must have said it was sheer garbage, it was noise, it was nonsense. Only now are they saying the Beatles are the greatest.

SIMON: When I grew up there was only one station that played rock'n'roll in New York, WINS, and it only came on at a certain hour of the night. It wasn't on seven days a week. On Sundays, when it wasn't on, I'm turning the dial looking for interesting music—which is how I first heard gospel—but as I'm spinning the dial I also heard Latin music, country music. I didn't like it, but I heard it. Now, when I think back on it, there are certain things about it that I like. The fact that somebody may have heard my music doesn't mean that I was their favorite artist, but the sound was there. Like Wynton Marsalis said, "A musician has to accumulate so many different styles of music to really understand where his music is coming from." His point was that people weren't doing that, they were ignoring the past and their history.

SHOCKLEE: Rock'n'roll back in the late '60s, early '70s had a lot of different music in it. You listen to the classic rockers, it was influenced by a lot of different music. Deep Purple had a jazz situation happening, Grand Funk had funk mixed in with its stuff, the Stax sound incorporated classical strings behind soulful, funky riffs, which gave it a whole other texture. These guys pushed music. Nowadays you hear the bands regurgitating something that's been regurgitated. The kids don't get a chance to experience any other particular music inside the music.

SIMON: But you've got to absolve them from blame. Take Motown; take Berry Gordy and the music he created. He's remembering the music he heard when he was a kid. Now you're talking about culture that was not totally homogenized by the media. There were different pockets in the country where different music existed that was real. Now, with the way television covers everything, it's actually hard to find that.

SHOCKLEE: Now it's more like, Let's copy what already hit. That's a whole different mentality.

SIMON: Not only that, you start to get penalized when you make something different. Look what happened to me with *Graceland*. The song "Graceland" won a Grammy for record of the year. That song was on the charts for three weeks and never got higher than 81. Radio didn't play that record. It didn't fit into anybody's format.

SHOCKLEE: *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* was No. 1 on the black charts for two weeks, made Top 20 pop, but was never played on the radio. The difference is, you made a different record for an audience that is not as active as the audience that I made a record for. My audience is very active right now and represents the majority of record buyers. They're very vocal; they're very visual; they're going to go out and tell the next person. People who are going to appreciate Paul Simon's music are not going to run around on the streets and blast it in their Jeeps.

SIMON: And I felt when I was making that record that if I don't make this record really interesting nobody in my generation is going to pay attention, because they don't listen to music for information anymore. They don't expect to learn anything about the world from this because they're already shut out. They've already been eclipsed by a generation that plays another kind of music—

SHOCKLEE: —people who don't really care.

SIMON: My generation is a total music generation as much as the generation today. But people get older, they have families, other concerns. Also, the music got boring and the generation got boring. So how does an artist talk to people if they're no longer listening?

SHOCKLEE: We had the same concerns with our audience. We knew they weren't going to play it on the radio, but one, we had this message behind the music, and two, it's very abrasive, so we got to do something to wake these people up to check out this particular record.

SIMON: Why do you think the life span of rappers seems to be so short?

"When I grew up, you had to battle against the best rock'n'roll record, the best blues, the best jazz. Music should be competitive all the way around."

—Hank Shocklee

SHOCKLEE: Because rap is the last available music. Rap is the scavenger of the music business: Hey, prey on every piece of music that's out there; after people get over your voice, the particular style that you kick your rhymes in, and your subject matter, there's really nothing else you can do. It's not like you can make a ten-minute instrumental and dazzle people with your musicianship. It always has to be a vocal situation. You have to focus on the word and the subject, and when that wears thin, it's like, *next*.

SIMON: That's why you hear rap being combined with more music, right? It's got to go there. It's got nowhere else to go but the music.

SHOCKLEE: I envision in about four, five years, there's going to be no live shows. Live shows are only going to be for the super-superstars that MTV got in crazy heavy rotation. They'll be the only ones able to afford to go into an arena.

SIMON: I disagree. If you project the trend at the moment, that will be so. But I don't think it will happen, because there's always going to be somebody with that kind of gift that people will flock to see, as they always have throughout history.

SHOCKLEE: You're basing everything on talent, and I'm telling you there's going to be people that are going to look at talent totally different from you or I.

SIMON: You're saying the entire course of the human race is going to be radically different, that people will no longer love to hear the sound of the human voice? It just isn't so. It's always been that way, and it will always be that way.

SHOCKLEE: You got kids growing up not knowing what a live drummer is.

SIMON: Well, they will, because there are plenty of live drummers. You're telling me about what's happening in a certain section of the world. That's not what's happening in South America. That's not what's happening in Africa.

SHOCKLEE: I'm speaking for here in the States. You're one of the fortunate ones that can go to South America. You got people who can't leave their own particular cities. There's such propaganda being put out there by this culture about being rich and famous that these other cultures think that whatever's in the States is what's supposed to be.

SIMON: Well, if you go back into the terrible, distant past, you'll find periods of time when popular culture was pretty thin in terms of musical quality. Then, from someplace you never expected, comes something that turns everybody's head around. Believe me, the last thing anybody would have expected in 1964, when music was packaged on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*, was that people from Liverpool were going to come up with music and turn the world around. Couldn't be predicted, and I think it'll happen again.

SHOCKLEE: For anything like that to happen, there's got to be a climate. It might not be playing instruments; it might be breaking instruments.

SIMON: People have played instruments throughout the history of the species. It's never ever been other than that.

SHOCKLEE: I think it's been more about a sound that turned people on, and it just so happened that it was made by an instrument.

SIMON: The sound you're talking about is taken from preexisting sounds, like the drum machine, and sooner or later, that well is going to run dry. Unless you get new drummers, you don't have new sounds.

SHOCKLEE: Well, if we'd be quiet for a minute . . . I hear a lot of sounds. I hear a bus going by, a car horn, somebody closing a door.

SIMON: It's a hard case to make that those sounds will fulfill—as the main part of the meal—what actual instruments have always done. We've broadened our idea of what sound is and how it can be used in terms of music, but we haven't eliminated the heart. I don't believe you'll be as satisfied hearing a series of buses and doors as you will hearing a real instrument.

SHOCKLEE: If you took people and played them nothing but simulated sounds, they'd start to develop a universe within, playing sounds from an artificial instrument.

SIMON: But I think somebody's going to appear with a wooden flute, and people are going to go, Wow, what is that sound? I love it, because they've been loving that sound for ten-thousand years. I'm not saying people's vocabulary of sounds will ever eliminate the sound of the bus passing or the door closing; once your ear opened to the thing, it's in there. I am saying that these essential ingredients are so deeply a part of the human species that they could never go away. Melody has gone so far away that people don't think it will ever come back, but I don't believe it. You know why? Because at some point in time, everybody stands up and tears fall out of their eyes when the appropriate moment comes to sing "Amazing Grace." Because there's a certain moment when only "Amazing Grace" will do.

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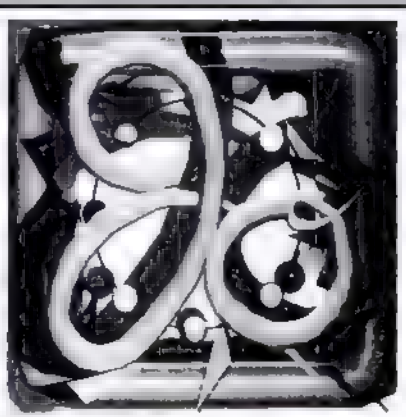

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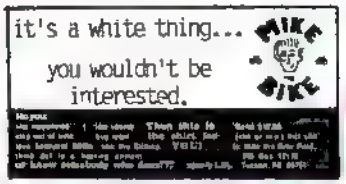

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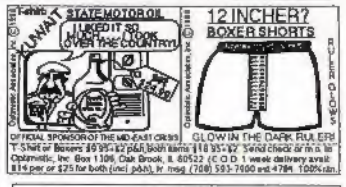
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Corporal Eazy-E becomes first American court-martialed in the war with Iraq.

THE TROOPS ARE DEPLOYED to Saudi Arabia. For his sins, Captain Axl Rose is given a mission. He is to journey up the Suez Canal and terminate a flipped-out Green Beret colonel in Port Said.

CAPTAIN ROSE: But there's, like, nothing going on there.

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Master Sergeant D issues a "halt" order.

Sonic Youth bassist Corporal Kim Gordon is first official KIA in the war with Iraq; first American GI over Kuwaiti border.

AFTER LYING IN THE DESERT for days, Buck Private Brickell is picked up by a caravan of bedouins, all of whom wear gas masks. They take her straight to Saddam Hussein, who loves that bit about "I know what I know if you know what I mean."

HUSSEIN: If you stay with me, I will let you fire my Supergun whenever you wish.

BRICKELL: What if I say no?

HUSSEIN: Then I will lavish you with riches and send you home safely. I'm a big fan.

BRICKELL: Can I think about it?

Buck Private Edie Brickell becomes the first American traitor in the war with Iraq.

PRESIDENT BUSH CALLS an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council and holds his breath until an agreement is reached to send a multinational peacekeeping force to the Middle East. As the size of the force is never discussed, the U.N. sends only one airplane. Traitor Brickell effortlessly sights and destroys it with the Supergun. The members of the group Kaoma are killed instantly.

Lieutenant Colonel Jesse "The Bod" Ventura volunteers for a suicide mission, the goal of which is to liberate Major Slash from captivity. He is angling for the opening slot on Guns N' Roses' tour.

Sinéad O'Connor joins American forces on the Kuwaiti border, where she is killed and buried almost instantly.

The incident is being investigated.

THOUGH SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, Lieutenant Colonel Ventura has penetrated Iraqi defenses and freed Major Slash, killing thousands of victor Saddams along the way. Before leaving the city, Major Slash insists on some impromptu intelligence work at a local hashish bar. Wearily, Lieutenant Colonel Ventura agrees to the plan.

A CLOSED-DOOR PENTAGON MEETING is convened to discuss the failing war effort and sag in morale. Buck Private Eazy-E is released from Leavenworth, promoted to generalissimo, and sent to the Saudi-Kuwait border. His only orders, straight from the Oval Office: *Cold-kick us some ass over there, E.*

Captain Rose reaches Port Said and finds AWOL Green Beret colonel Bob Dylan sitting all by himself in a Western Sizzlin', reading his poetry out loud. He's not even wearing his beret. After listening to him say nothing for hours, Captain Rose opens his throat for him with a steak knife.

CAPTAIN ROSE: Baez says hello.

COLONEL DYLAN (choking): The whore. The whore.

The Pogues, Japanese super group Pink Lady, and Generalissimo Eazy-E provide the Chuck D unit with the firepower and courage it needs to clear Iraqi forces out of Kuwait for good. This done, MREs are ingested and the USO is called in.

BOB HOPE: I haven't been in these parts since the big one.

BROOKE SHIELDS: You mean World War II?

BOB HOPE: Nope, I mean the Exodus.

HUSSEIN SHOWS THE traitor Brickell his nuclear warheads.

BRICKELL: They're so big!

HUSSEIN: This one here was a little present from a certain Mr. North, who is not going to win any spelling bees soo—"

BRICKELL *(pushing button)*: Okay if I push this?

IN LOS ANGELES, Madonna is putting the finishing touches on her most political album to date, when hydrogen bombs evaporate her and anyone else who could give a shit. Ironically, the warhead that levels L.A. actually crashes through the roof of Madonna's recording studio and lands right in her lap before detonating. Her last thought is "I *am* special."

Meanwhile, back in the desert, a trumpet flourish to the tune of "La Marseillaise" diverts the USO audience's attention to a dune nearby, where John Lennon stands dressed in white, flowing robes. He is singing "Give Peace a Chance" and glowing like the lamb of God. High above him, a tie-dyed parachute opens and a lean, bell-bottomed black man with a flaming white Stratocaster smiles knowingly down at the crowd. He waves. It's Jimi Hendrix.

LENNON: All we are saying—

HENDRIX *(riffing on flaming guitar, drowning Lennon out)*: I sho' got the blues this mornin'!

The crowd goes wild.

Hendrix lands squarely on Lennon's shoulders, driving him down into the dune like a tent peg until only the Beatle's head remains visible. After a three-hour live-at-Winterland-era set, which includes a balls-to-the-wall jam (with bassist Jack Casady of Jefferson Airplane) on "Killing Floor," Hendrix addresses the multitude:

"I see a lot of faces, a lot of faces out there wonderin' what to do next, wonderin' where to go now. Wonderin' what all these clouds here on the horizon are about, wonderin', maybe, why all this sand is turnin' to glass. Well, I . . . I think we all know where we're goin', and if that's—"

The troops take off running across the desert towards Baghdad, screaming like Indians in a John Wayne movie and shooting their Uzis into the air. Hendrix looks after them, rubbing the back of his neck and frowning.

LENNON'S HEAD: I thought yer show was maybe a bit on the narcissistic side, a bit like me own performances. If ye'd been more political wif 'em from the start they'd uv listened all right. "Castles Madeuv Sand" woulduv been a real hit here. Shoulduv gone with that one—left the flashier stuff for another go. Could use a hand here, gettin' up and ull.

Hendrix stops walking. He checks out the sky, the bird-less black sky, the mushrooms popping up in the distance, the mirages all around him. And he smiles. "Far out," he says.

He plucks out "Castles Made of Sand" on his burning Strat.

He kicks Lennon's head over the next dune.

And he pushes on toward Mecca.

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Alive with pleasure!

After all, if smoking isn't a pleasure, why bother?

Newport

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